Chapter 26
Ṣan'ā' Food and Cookery

Introduction

The Ṣan'ānīs, says al-Hamdānī,[1] 'have arts in [the preparation of] foods which the foods of no other town can attain.' Elsewhere[2] he supplies a list of comestibles available in Ṣan'ā' which includes fruits, vegetables—not very many, varieties of wheat—the Bawnī wheat of Qā' al-Bawn north of Ṣan'ā' is specially renowned, grains, bread, and animal products such as milk, curds and ghee (*samn*). Though the medieval Rasūlid treatise, *Bughyat al-fallāḥīn*[3] is mainly concerned with the Lower Yemen and the Tihāmah, much of what it has to say about grain, fruit and vegetables applies also to Ṣan'ā' and the north. By way of comparison with present-day Ṣan'ānī food may be considered the rations required for the men working on the Mārib Dam, as set forth in two of the pre-Islamic Dam inscriptions, that of Shuraḥbīl and that of Abrahah,[4] separated chronologically by 93 years. Professor Beeston writes:

'Each list has three main sections: cereals and dates; meat; liquor. Under the first of these headings the Shuraḥbīl text lists, besides dates, 'fine flour (s^1dl) and meal (*ṭḥn*) [Ar. *ṭaḥīn*] of wheat (*br*) [Ar. *burr*], barley (s^2'*r*) [Ar. *sha'īr*] and *gddt* [which is probably *dhurah*].' Abrahah subsumes all the cereals under the generic description *dqq* (*daqīq*), "flour", without further specification. Under the second heading we have in Shuraḥbīl, *ḍbyḥm/wqrṣm/wbqrm,* and in Abrahah, *ḍbyḥm/wbqrm/wqṭntm*; from which one would infer that *qrṣ* and *qṭnt* both mean small cattle, i.e. sheep and goats. It would also be a possible suggestion that *ḍbyḥ* was contrasted with both the oxen and small cattle, and hence probably camels. But the *Corpus* editor has taken *ḍbyḥ* as "sheep" and *qrṣ* as "goats". One reason for the *Corpus* proposal is clearly the fact that in between this item and the liquor item Shuraḥbīl, (but not Abrahah), inserts a separately ennumerated group of *'ḍḥm/w'ḍwdm,* taken by the *Corpus* as "full grown camels and young camels", which seems to me etymologically very speculative. Still, in terms of general sense it has something to recommend it, inasmuch as one would quite expect camels to be separately ennumerated.'

'The liquor section is again fairly straightforward. It lists "(fermented) liquor (s^1qy) of *grbb* and *fṣy*", probably fresh grapes and raisins. Shuraḥbīl then adds "liquor (s^1qy) of dates", and Abrahah "*mzr* of dates". According to the classical Arabic lexicographers *mizr* is specifically *nabīdh* made from *dhurah;* but in Sabaic it evidently had a wider sense. Shuraḥbīl, (but not Abrahah) finally adds *dbs*[1] (obviously the modern *dibs*) and *ḥm't,* the latter rendered by the *Corpus* and Conti-Rossini as "butter" which is certainly wrong if taken in the strict sense.'

Food in Ṣan'ā' is known as *ukāl* and the traveller's provisions are called *rashād* or *zād*[5]—while Hamdānī uses the term *sufrah.*

Writing in the late 11th/17th century, Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Saḥūlī tells us, of Ṣan'ā',

Hādhā, wa-fi 'l-aswāqī,
Kam mushtar-in wa-bāyi'ī,
Lam takhlu min fawākihī,
Illā mada-n yasīrā,
Ka-'l-shahri aw shahraynī,
Wa-kam bi-hā dhī ḥirfat-in,
'ajā'ibu 'l-arzāqī,
li-nukhabi 'l-baḍā'i'ī.
wa-min ṣiyāḥ 'l-fākihī
muqaddar-an taqdirā,
ṣidq-un bi-ghayri maynī.
wa-nusuk-in wa-'iffat-in.

So it is—and the markets are full of fine victuals,
How many a merchant there is of choice wares.
Never does it lack in fruits, or the cries of the merry jesting
Except for a short season, fixed and determined,
About a month or two—this is true and no lying.
How many a craftsman it has, devout and decorous.

Hamdānī[6] makes reference to books on cookery, though the text seems to indicate that he does not mean Yemeni books, but among Rasūlid writings still extant in Ms. it is more than likely we shall come upon some treatise on the culinary art. Some notion of the range of dishes about the mid 12th/18th century may be gained from a poem cited by Zabārah,[7] and how different these were from the traditional diet of Ḥaḍramawt can be seen from 'Alī Bā Gharīb's poem[8] written in Indonesia, expressing his yearning to taste again the simple foods of his native land. Since

1 *Ṣifat Jazīrat al-'Arab,* ed. D. H. Müller, Leiden, 1884-91, 56, *La-hum ṣanā'i' fi 'l-aṭ'imah allatī lā yalḥaq bi-hā aṭ'imat balad-in.*
2 Ibid, 196-99.
3 See n. 38 infra.
4 Numbered CIH 540, lines 37-50, 84-97, and CIH 541, lines 118-30, respectively. See J. M. Solá Solé, *Las dos grandes inscripciones sudarabigas del dique de Mârib*, Barcelona-Tübingen, 1960, not altogether reliable, containing both misprints and mis-readings in addition to the usual lexical uncertainties.
Wqrṣm suggests to me *qurāsh,* cattle in general, and in connection with *fṣy* it may be remarked that *faṣ-an* means date-stones in at least the Lower Yemen today (RBS). *Mzr* can mean other liquors besides that of dates in the lexica.
M. Rodinson, 'Notes de vocabulaire alimentaire sudarabique et arabe', *GLEHS*, Paris, 1963, IX, 103-7, discusses food apparently in a temple's store, *shnn/m, dbs/m, lbb/m,* the first probably equivalent to *shanīn* (milk fresh or collected in a skin (Lane), *dibs,* date-honey, grape-juice or bee-honey, though date-honey seems most likely. *Lbb,* for which he suggests the *qulb* or soft heart of the palm-tree, is more likely to be something like *lubb al-burr* (see n. 64), heart of wheat. This would keep whereas the *qulb* would go bad.
5 E. Rossi, *L'Arabo parlato a Ṣan'ā',* Roma, 1939, 160. For diet in 19th century Aden see F. M. Hunter, *An account of the British Settlement in Aden in Arabia*, London, 1877, 47, and spices 122 seq.
6 Ibid, 198.
7 *Nashr al-'arf,* Cairo, 1359-77, I, 427 and cf. 588-89.
8 *Prose and poetry from Ḥaḍramawt,* London, 1951, 116 ff, no. 32.

the *qūzī* roast lamb figures in the poem in the *Nashr al-'arf,*[9] it is possible that this method of preparation was introduced during the first Ottoman occupation, and during the second Ottoman occupation, such items as *baqlāwah, bālūzah* etc. *Basīs*[10] and *zalābiyā* could perhaps also have been introduced during the first Ottoman period.

The large temporary labour force in Aden, especially after World War II cannot but have introduced new foreign items of diet for at least occasional use in parts of the Yemen and in Ṣan'ā' itself. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Shāmī informs me that in his youth vegetables were not much eaten in Ṣan'ā' but now their use has greatly expanded. I can confirm this was also the case in the Aden Protectorates where the potato (as apart from the sweet potato in Ḥaḍramawt) became a common article of diet only after World War II, along with other vegetables introduced by the British. After 1962, the occupying UAR forces introduced new Egyptian tinned foods, and the million and more Yemenis now working as temporary labour in Sa'ūdī Arabia are able to buy and familiarize their country with many foreign foods—this has made a marked difference to the diet of both town and countryside.

Over twenty years ago I was told that *al-Zuyūd mā ya'kulūn al-samak*[11] *abad-an,* the Zaydīs never eat fish; it is said also that the mountain tribes called fish *dūd,* worms. Hamdānī himself makes no allusion to fish as part of the diet. The Jews used however to sell fresh water fish in Ṣan'ā'.[12] Formerly only fish preserved in some sort of way would be eaten in Ṣan'ā' and probably not very much, but in the Mashriq, I remember well, tinned Japanese tunny was being eaten some fifteen years ago. Now fish is brought in refrigerated vans or ice from Hodeidah to Ṣan'ā' where it finds a ready market.

As already seen[13] sheep-or-goat mutton is preferred to beef. Ṣan'ānīs had no tabu on eggs, but in 1972 they were small, often bad, and hard to find—large imported eggs are now widely sold in Ṣan'ā' sūqs, and frozen broiler fowls. A round *qurṣ* of white cheese smoked brown on the outside is imported to Ṣan'ā' from the Lower Yemen. Dates are not grown in the Ṣan'ā' district but imported from Najrān or the Tihāmah—dry dates sold by the basket (*zambīl*) go to Ṣan'ā' from, for example, the village of Mijaylis near Zabīd, the best type being *munāṣif* which lasts about a year.

Grapes[14] are important in the Ṣan'ā' region and viniculture in general is described by the *Bughyat al-fallāḥīn.* Raisins are made from them. Wine is still made secretly in the Yemen, and vinegar is on sale. The Jews used to distill *'araq* but this may have ceased with their departure.

The basis of any meal in the Yemen is bread and a relish or porridge, and *qishr*-coffee. Except for the well-to-do meat and fowl were occasional. The order of more elaborate meals would be *shafūt, ḥāmiḍah, bint al-ṣaḥn/sūsī, ḥilbah.* Last of all, when the first hunger pangs are blunted, comes meat which is divided out by the host.

'Table-manners' are more or less those common to Arabia as a whole. The host says to his guest, *'Ḥayya 'ala 'l-ḥāṣil,* Come and have what there is', even if the meal be sumptuous. To this the reply is made, *'Al-bayt bayt-nā mā bish takalluf,* (We are) at home here and without formalities.' At the end of the meal the guest would say, *'Kaththar Allāh khayra-kum wa-wassa' na'īm-kum,* Thank you (lit. May God give you abundance), and widen your happiness/well-being.' The host replies, *''Ashshar Allāh khuḍā-kum/khuṭā-kum,* May God make your steps (i.e. visits) tenfold.' *'Al-khayr khayru-kum, khayr Allāh ma'ā-kum,* All good be yours, God's benevolence be with you.' At the time of a funeral (*mawt*), the repast, a *ghadā kāmil,* is provided not by the bereaved family, but by friends and relations come to mourn with them. The mourner-guest departing says, *'Raḥim Allāh mayyit-kum,* May God have mercy on your departed.' To this a reply would be, *''Aṣam Allāh qulūba-kum,* May God preserve your hearts', *'Kaththar Allāh khayra-kum, lā ji'il fi dhālika jazā',* God give you abundance (i.e. Thank you). May He not do the like of that,' i.e., take away one of you. This is a women's formula, men using *''Ashshar Allāh . . .'*

In Yemeni eyes rose-water completes the entertainment—it is sprinkled on the head, down the back of the neck, and up the wide sleeves (*ardān*) of traditional Yemeni costume among the ulema.

Yemeni chronicles record periodic famines and plagues of locusts—locusts are of course eaten. At famine times the people look to the Government to distribute grain from the silos (*madāfin*). Hoarding of grain to raise prices is prohibited by the *sharī'ah.* A rather unusual type of distribution was made by the Imām al-Mutawakkil Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn in the 1136/1723-4 famine in Ṣan'ā' and most of the mountains during which many died of starvation, and the *qadaḥ* of grain rose to eight *qurūsh.* He brought out all the sugar, honey, dates and sweet-stuffs (*ḥalawiyyāt*) from his stores (*makhāzin*) and distributed them to the needy (*fuqarā'*) in the lanes of Ṣan'ā'. The next year was one of good harvests and prices dropped till four *qadaḥs* of wheat fetched a *qirsh,* which was also the price paid for six *qadaḥs* of *dhurah* or eight *qadaḥs* of barley.[15]

Kitchen Utensils and Gear

The kitchen (*daymah*)[16] contains at least one *tannūr*-oven.[17] This is a large pottery jar set in a sort of bench (*dakkah*) made of clay. There are three sizes of *tannūr, kabīrah, ṣaghīrah* and a very small one known as *ṣa'dah,* used in the morning (*ṣabāḥ*) to avoid lighting one of the larger *tannūrs.* Girls used to be taught how to use the *tannūr* in general, by practice with the *ṣa'dah.* The *tannūr* has an opening at the foot called (*bāb*) *al-manāq,*[18] for the insertion of fuel, little pieces of kindling wood (*al-luṣwah min al-khashab*). The open top is called *luqf al-tannūr* but this does not seem to be a precise term, and an iron cross-piece (*sīkh*) can be placed on top of this opening, or, if desired, a clay cover (*kisāwah/kiswah*). The interior sides of the *tannūr* are known as *'arḍ al-tannūr,* and bread is baked inside it by slapping the flat rounds against the *'arḍ*—to which they stick and cook. One says, *'Ib'id al-khubzah min 'arḍ al-tannūr lā tiḥriq/'a-tiḥriq,* Remove the bread from the side of the oven lest it burn/it's going to burn.'[19] A certain skill is required to render the *tannūr* right for baking—to break it in. A woman will *'tudarris-hā'* (lit. teach/train it), as is done in the case of the stone *maqlā* casserole. The *furn/firn* (pl., *afrān*) is quite a different oven, being made of masonry (see p. 550a, n. 95).

The *mawqad* of metal or other material is a sort of brazier holding hot coals on top of which food dishes or coffee-pots are placed to keep them warm before serving. The writer has seen a sort of three-legged rest to hold a hot dish made of carved wood and called *rifā'ah* in the tribal areas.

Most typically Yemeni is the *maqlā/maqlah* made of *ḥaraḍ,* a steatite stone, grey in colour. Nowadays they mostly seem to be

9 *Nashr al-'arf,* loc. cit.
10 Dozy, *Supplément,* gives various senses, perhaps a sort of date cake or biscuit.
11 South Arabians always call fish *ḥūt* but *samak* might be used by those hearing the term from outside the country.
12 E. Brauer, *Ethnologie der Jemenitischen Juden,* Heidelberg, 1934, 108.
13 Cf. pp. 128b, 235a.
14 Varieties of grapes are listed in Hamdānī's *Ṣifah,* 196. Cf. p. 271b, and other sources. The commonest fruits are the apricot (*barqūq*), banana (*mawz*) from the Tihāmah, cedrat (*tranj*), quince (*safarjal*), fig (*balas 'Arabī/tīn*), prickly pear (*balas Turkī*), mango (*'ambā*), apple (*tuffāḥ*), pear (*'ambarūd*), pomegranate (*rummān*), melon (*baṭṭīkh*), peach (*firsik*), plum (*injāṣṣ/ijjāṣ*), orange (*burtuqān*—in Aden *lim ḥālī*), lemon (*laymūn*), etc.
15 *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 588.
16 For this word see Ismā'īl al-Akwa', *al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* Cairo, 1388/1968, I, 14, no. 37.
17 For illustrations of the *tannūr*, see pls. 26.7 and 8. The *tannūr* is feminine in gender though masculine in form.
18 Explained as *bāb al-tannūr al-nāzilī.*
19 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished. The *malas* is a *birmah* used for *lasīs* and *dijrah.*

made in Ṣa'dah—one speaks of a *maqlā Ṣa'diyyah,* but they are, or were, made in other places. In Barat in 1973 a large *maqlā* cost forty *riyāls.* There are various shapes and sizes. Pieces of *ḥaraḍ* are found on medieval, perhaps even pre-Islamic sites so stoneware must have been manufactured for many centuries. The *madhalah/mathalah* made of *ḥaraḍ* is deeper than a *maqlā*—it was compared, very neatly, with the shape of the Egyptian tarbush, and it is used for baking dishes directly over the fire, as for instance the *mathalah ḥaqq al-kubānah* for maize-cake. The *maqlā ḥaraḍ* is used for *saltah/ḥilbah,* and a bigger open pot for sauces and bread dishes. These stone dishes always have a pleasing coal-black colour as a result of the process known as *tadrīs.* When they 'train' (*yidarrisū*) or 'break in' the *maqlā* they rub it with oil (*zayt*) or fatty things (*ḥājāt dasimah*) so that it drinks up the fatness (*yishrab al-dusūmah*). The *maqlā* is then laid in the sun and onions put in it. Presumably the black colour comes from the burning of the oil into the stone when cooking. Like so many other things it figures in a Ṣan'ānī proverbial saying, '*Lā maqlā wa-lā malas wa-lā washsh li-'l-samrah,* No stone bowl or clay pot, nor yet a (pretty) face to talk to in the evening!' This is said of a useless person.

Two rounded medium sized clay (*madar*) pots are used for boiling meat and porridge (*'aṣīd*), called *jafnah*[20] and *birmah.* The *birmah* used particularly for meat has a basket or clay cover called *kiswah al-birmah.*[21] The *jafnah* is used for *ḥilbah.*

Other cooking vessels are the cooking pot (*qidr,* pl., *qudūr*) a general term, *ṣaḥn* (pl., *ṣuḥūn*) a shallow bowl, platter, *tanjarah* (pl., *tanājir*) a Turkish word for saucepan. The *tast/dust*[22] is probably of aluminium (*ma'dan*), and in Aden, Indian manufactured cooking utensils and containers have always been in use, one might say, in living memory. A *maṭyabah* or *wi'ā'* is a bowl, as is *ṭāsah/ṭāṣah* (pl., *ṭiṣān*) and a *ṭāsah ḥaqq al-qāt* is the little bowl for drinking water at a *qāt* session. *Lajan* (pl., *-āt*) is a pot or bowl also.

The *ṣullā/ṣullā'/ṣullah,* girdle, is said to be the same as the *ṭāwah (poèle à frire)* and *sāj,* the latter a word of Turkish provenance. The *ṣullā* has a cover (*ghuṭāyah*) of basket or clay manufacture. It is flat like a *ṣaḥn* (in the sense of platter) and is the size of the top of the *tannūr*-oven upon which it sits. They 'hansel' it (*yidarris-ah*) by rubbing oil onto it and light a fire under it in the *bāb al-manāq* hole of the *tannūr*-oven. The *ṣullā* is used for *laḥūḥ*-pancakes, and each time one is cooked the *ṣullā* is rubbed over with oil to clean off the bits of the pancake still adhering to it, and present a clear surface for the next *laḥūḥah.*

Every kitchen will have a flat stone *masḥaqah* (pl., *mazāḥiq*) and a rolling pin (*ja'ār/ji''ār/ja''ār* ?) for crushing spices and herbs. A *maṭḥan(ah)* quern is, or was, also an essential in a house. An item which might be found is a *mawḥiz,* a pestle for crushing *'alas*-wheat. Rossi[23] speaks of a mortar (*hāwan,* pl., *-āt*) and pestle (*al-yad*) for pounding spices. An essential is a *makhbazah,* a round mushroom-shaped pillow with a handle underneath for applying the flat round of bread to the side of the *tannūr*-oven. A *mashjanah* bowl (pottery, copper, etc.)[24] is used for laying down dough and sprinkling it with flour and a *ma'janah,* formerly of *naḥās* but now aluminium, is a kneading bowl.

Kitchen implements include knives (*sikkīn*) and shears (*maqaṣṣ*); for stirring food such as *dhurah* and wheat porridges there is the *maṭ'am/maḍ'am* (*maṭ'am tuḥarrik bi-hi 'l-'aṣīd wa-'l-harīsh*), called in Scotland a spurtle, also the *mal'aṭ* for *'aṣīd,* the *mamhad* for chickpeas and *fūl*; for serving food spoons, sometimes wooden spoons (*mal'aqah al-khashab*), are of course used, and in cooking the skewer (*sinnārah*) and *makhdā*-iron. The scoop (*madharr*) for sprinkling and *shaqfah* spoon are made of gourd (*dubbā*)—the *dawbalī*[25] a large clay or gourd vessel is perhaps not a Ṣan'ānī word. Cups used are *bardaq* (pl., *barādiq*) and the universal *ḥaysī* from Ḥays village. A water jar is *madall(ah),* a smaller one is *qillah/qullah* or *kūz,* a narrow-necked jar is *ku'dah* (pl., *ku'ad*). Rossi[26] adds *khashūqah* a ladle, and *maghraf* a scoop. Metal trays are *tabsī* and *ma'sharah* (*ma'āshir*), a basket tray is *ghuṭā/ghuḍā,* but there are many types, some imported from the Tihāmah. The smooth sheep skin (*jild alghanam al-ṭāṣī*) upon which a meal used to be set is called *naṭa',*[27] the basket for bread is *tawrah.*

The clay coffee-pot *jabanah/jamanah* 'hansels (*tudarris*)' itself. The small metal *jazwah* (= *kanakah*) is also used. The *jamanah/jabanah* has a handle (*mazqam*), neck (*raqabah*) and *dhannābah,* a little projection for the finger on top of the handle.

Water for culinary or other purposes in Ṣan'ā' had to be drawn from a well in or near the house. She might say, '*Ana anza' mā,* I am drawing water', or '*Ana aḍrub al-dalū ila 'l-bīr,* I let down the bucket into the water.' A bucket/glass etc., full of water would be a *dafrah mā.*

Some Cookery Terms

Without, or with too little salt (*tāfil*) One says, *'ād-uh tāfil,* it is still not salted enough. Give me a pinch of salt—*Iddī lī dhirrih*[28] *milḥ.* A piece of salt is *iksīr milḥ* (archaic ?). Tough, of meat, is *'ariz.* Ṣan'ānīs say, '*Fulān 'ariz al-tafāhum ma'-āh,* It is hard work coming to an understanding with so and so.' Of something hot to the taste such as chillies, one says, '*Qadī/qad-hī faḥḥ qawiyy.*' To shrink (in cooking) is *tamẓar* or *tibqī ẓāmirah* or *tala'waz.* A crumb is *ḥathrah.* Rossi[29] supplies some terms that do not figure in the recipes infra, *maqliyy* roasted, *muqalqal* fried, *nādij* boiled.

The only fat Annika Bornstein mentions is *samn* which she translates as 'butter-fat', and this has not been altered where her text is quoted. When local *samn* (*baladī*) is prepared fenugreek (*ḥilbah*) and black cummin (*quḥṭah*) are added to it. It is very expensive, but, as she says, the preferred fat. In English *samn* is sometimes rendered as 'clarified butter', but the more convenient Anglo-Indian term 'ghee' is used here everywhere else. It is often replaced by imported tinned margarine (*saman shajarī*), locally produced sesame oils or other imported oils. *Shajarī* is usually boiled and *ḥilbah* added to it, possibly also other ingredients—it is then called *saman maqlūb.*

Laban is butter-milk, *ḥalīb* is fresh (*tāzih*) milk of cows or sheep-and-goats. *Tharīb* or *yūrt,* the latter word from Turkish, is curds (yoghourt) made by adding *rāyib,* curdled milk, to fresh milk.

Aḥmad Qaryah in 1973, composed for me in colloquial Arabic in consultation with his sister in Ṣan'ā' a description[30] of the various dishes in common use there. The following year Annika Bornstein sent me her informative paper[31] dealing scientifically with Yemeni food. Broadly speaking Annika Bornstein's classification has been followed in the dishes listed below, but Aḥmad Qaryah is quoted first and her description second. To this much addition has been made but further enquiry will of course produce yet more.

20 A *jafnah* in tribal South Yemen is usually a wooden bowl.
21 'Abdullāh Ya'qūb Khān, *Qāmūs al-amthāl al-'Adaniyyah,* Cairo, 1933, 38, no. 441, has a proverb, *'Ghiṭā' al-burmah shaqaf,* The cover of the cookpot is earthen-ware.'
22 This Persian word which came early into Arabic has a variety of forms.
23 *L'Arabo parlato,* 155.
24 See p. 545b, *ishnijī*, et passim.
25 Wolf Leslau, 'Texts on Yemenite folklore', *Proc. of the American Academy for Jewish Research,* Philadelphia, 1944, XIV, 248.
26 Rossi, op. cit., 155, 153.
27 Ibid, 159 seq.
28 *Dhirrih,* from *dharra,* to scatter, is used of other substances also.
29 Op. cit., 159.
30 *Ajmal al-tabrīkāt bi-munāsabat 'id-kum al-mufaḍḍal,* so named because presented to me at Christmas!
31 *Food and society in the Yemen Arab Republic,* FAO, Rome, 1974, with a bibliography.

Bread

Introduction

As in other agrarian societies the staple food (*ukāl*) of the Yemen is bread (*luqmah, khubz*), eaten dipped in a relish (*idām*),[32] varying according to circumstances from a vegetable stew, broth, fenugreek (*ḥilbah*) to milk, ghee, etc. A piece of bread eaten after a meal without dipping (*laysa bi-ma'dūm*) is called *maḥramat al-ḥalq*[33] in colloquial parlance. After a meal the host must give *malūj*-bread toasted (*qāmiz* = *muḥammar*), with coffee, in wealthier houses richer fare. A proverb says, 'Dip the edge of the bread in the relish, my children, but you, 'Āmir, press [it] down deep, *Zaqqirū yā 'iyāl, wa-'nt, yā 'Āmir, ihmish.*'[34] It is used of a person who permits to himself what he prohibits to others.

Yemeni bread is mostly prepared in the form of flat rounds—the *qurṣ*. (If you say, 'So and so's round of bread is finished, *Filān kimil qurṣ-ah*',[35] it means that it is all up with him!) According to Annika Bornstein the ordinary *qurṣ* is only slightly leavened. Baps (*kidmah* see no. 6 infra), which Rossi[36] calls soldiers' bread since this is what they usually have, are also common. Some kinds of bread are prepared from a mixture of grains (cf. nos. 5, 7) but bread made from a single kind of flour without admixture is called *daqīq farṣ*. Small oblong loaves of imported refined wheat flour baked in modern bakeries are now commonly sold in Ṣan'ā', but they are naturally less nutritious than bread prepared in Yemeni fashion from native cereals.[37] These loaves are known as *rōti* an Indian word long in use in Aden.

'The people of Ṣan'ā'', says al-Hamdānī,[38] 'have *ruqāq* (thin rounds of bread) which is in no (other) town, so thin, wide, and white, because of the way in which the firm consistency of wheat comes into play.... In Ṣan'ā' the round (*raghīf*) of bread is not broken, but folded over and rolled up like a scroll.' He names the various types of cereal, but a detailed account of these is given by the Rasūlid Sultan, al-Malik al-Afḍal,[38] circa 1370 A.D.; most are still known today.

For some reason people appear not to care for barley bread but they eat it all the same, as may be perceived from the proverb, *Khubz al-sha'īr mākūl madhmūm*, or *Sha'īr al-Ḥaql mākūl madhmūm*. As well as al-Ḥaql barley, wheat (*birr*) of Ḥaḍūr is said to be eaten '*madhmūm*', disliked, but al-Malik al-Afḍal lists it among the varieties of wheat known to Ṣan'ā' folk without disapproval.[39] One of Qāḍī Ismā'īl's proverbs shows that *kadir,* Tihāmah *dhurah*-bread, is not highly esteemed.[40]

Some houses, according to al-Wāsi'ī[41] bake two or three times a day, but Annika Bornstein found it was usually baked at the present time at midday in quantities sufficient to do for lunch, supper and the next day's breakfast, but sometimes it is also baked fresh for breakfast early in the morning.

A piece of dough left over from the preceding batch of bread is dissolved in salted water and mixed with flour, salt and water, to make a soft dough which is left to rise overnight. Next morning the dough is re-kneaded, adding more flour and water, and left to rise for another hour. Town housewives however now use dry yeast which reduces the time for rising to one hour only. This is linked with a proverb, 'The beginning of yeast is water, *Awwal al-khamīrah mā*'[42] (this apparently means that one cannot stay out of a thing). When the dough (*'ajīn*)[43] has been baked into bread there is left in the bowl (*ṭāsah*) *al-salāwit*[44] (a residue). They rinse the bowl with a little water called (*ghasāyil*) among which they put a little ground flour (*ṭaḥīn*) and next day it is yeast (*khamīrah*).

The actions in the making of bread are (imperative feminine): 1 *'Ajjinī u-khammirī u-malliḥī*, knead, adding yeast and salt, 2 *Iftaqidī* (*al-'ajīn*), inspect the dough, 3 (When *khamīr,* risen) *ulṣay/ūqadī,* light (the *tannūr*), 4 *Kharrijī,* take out the pieces of dough, *Ika'atī* (*tibrim-hā*), work in the two hands, 5 *Iftaḥī*, work between the *makhbazah*-pillow and the hand, or, *ishnijī*, work between the edge of the hand and the palm, 6 *Duqqī* or *ikhbizī*, put on side of the *tannūr*, 7 *Ikhday*, remove.

Yemenis naturally prefer their bread oven-fresh and it is brought direct to the diners who eat it very hot (*ya'kulū dāfi dāfi*). So the proverb runs, 'What comes quickly is hotter, *'Ād al-mughazzir aḥmā'*.'[45] The basket used for carrying bread is known as *tawrah*; this is also used of big baskets for carrying grain on the head.

Kinds of Bread

1 Bread Made from Imported Flour (*al-khubz min al-daqīq*)

a We take (*najurr*) a little wheat flour (*ṭaḥīn*) and a little refined[46] (*ṣāfi*) flour, mixing it all up and kneading yeast and salt with it until[47] the dough is ready. We then put small pieces into the pot (*lajan,* pl., *-āt*), along with a little ground flour, into the bottom (*qā'ah*) of the pot. Then we take the round pillow (*makhbazah*)[48] and bake with it (*nikhbiz-ah*) until it is cooked (*nādijah*). We never take it out with the *makhdā*-iron (*nib'id-ah bi-'l-makhdā*)[49]—we take it out from inside the oven (*tannūr*) to the baskets (*ghuṭā*).[50]
b When the dough has risen it is divided into pieces and shaped into rounded balls, which are taken between the palms of the hand, pressed, shifted quickly from one hand to the other and pushed into a widening circular shape. When the dough is thin it is whipped on to a round pillow (*makhbazah*) and stretched out to an even circular shape. It is then flipped quickly onto the inside wall of the earthen oven (*tannūr*) and baked for one minute until it is slightly brown. Other breads are prepared in the same way, except that instead of using the *makhbazah* the ball is struck directly on to the side of the *tannūr* and flattened there by hand.

32 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā',* ed. Ṭāhā al-Ḥājirī, Cairo, 1948, 119 passim, has many anecdotes involving *idām.*

33 *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 590. There is a saying, *Maḥramat al-ḥalq tis'īn lij'ah,* Dry bread is ninety mouthfuls. (*Lij'ah* = *luqmah*). This would be said of a meal that was inadequate to satisfy—so that one would take a lot of dry bread that comes after the real meal in order to make up the deficiency.

34 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished. *Zqār* is *ghams ṭaraf al-luqmah fi 'l-idām.*

35 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Anisī, *Tarjī' al-aṭyār,* ed. al-Iryānī and al-Fā'ishī, Cairo, 1369 H., 412. Explained as *idhā intahā ḥazzu-hu*

36 *L'Arabo parlato,* 159.

37 E. Brauer, op. cit., 100-2, lists the types of bread used by the Yemeni Jews, most of which appear below. Not mentioned are:
Rūs, bread made of bran (*Kleie*). This was unknown to informants.
Ṣalūf, described as like *malūj,* mixed with *ḥilbah,* unknown to my Yemeni informants. Cf. Bread, no. 3, infra.
Fḥūq, Yemenis described this as like *kidam* (Bread, no. 7), like *qafū'ah* of several kinds of flour mixed together and *bisbās.*
Mthannā, like *ṣalūf,* of wheat or barley, but without *ḥilbah.* Ṣan'ānīs still use this with powdered sugar (*bathth*); its plural is *mathānī.*
Qalūb, like *zalābiyā* but thick and without ghee.
Nāṭulah/nāḍulah, a morsel of dough fallen into the fire, taken out with tongs by women and eaten.
Also mentioned is *ruqāqah* (Hamdānī's *ruqāq* ?) wheaten bread usually eaten hot with ghee.

38 *Ṣifah,* 198, quoted in my 'The cultivation of cereals in mediaeval Yemen', *Arabian Studies,* London-Cambridge, I, 1974, 33.

39 'The cultivation of cereals...', 43.

40 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 103, no. 291 and unpublished proverbs.

41 *Tārīkh al-Yaman,* Cairo, 1928, 299.

42 D. S. Goitein, *Jemenica,* Leipzig, 1934, 36, no. 187, *al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 260, no. 732. *Shābiy(ah)* rising, of flour, *khāmir,* risen, of dough, *faṭir,* without yeast.

43 Al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh madīnat Ṣan'ā',* Damascus, 1974, 239, gives a word, presumably Persian, *kardī* = *'ajīn*, dough.

44 From *salata* to dip one's bread, cf. p. 553b.

45 *Jemenica,* 107, no. 175, says *mughazzir* means someone who comes from afar or unexpectedly.

46 The term *khubz* is only applied specifically to this kind of bread. The refined flour is called *daqīq Miṣrī* though it is not actually Egyptian (Miṣri); it is imported.
Imported wheat flour is called *daqīq bābūrī.*

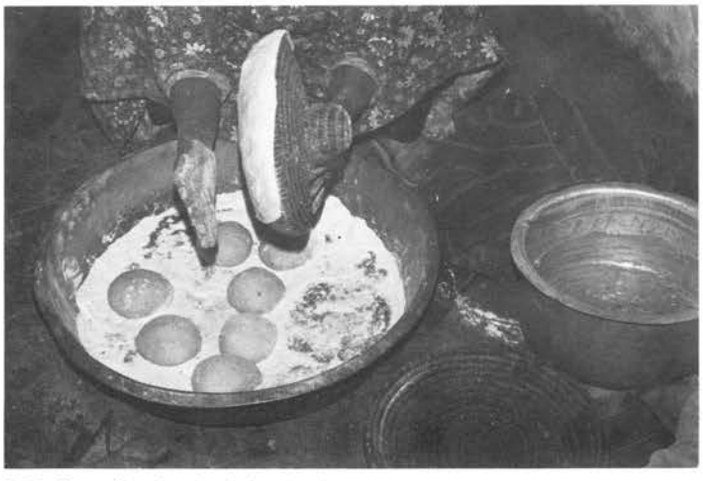
47 Until, *law mā* = *ḥattā,* explained as *ba'd an.* For this usage cf. al-Hamdānī, *Iklīl X,* ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Cairo, 1368 H., 14. The Arabic runs, *Lawmā qad al-'ajīn ḥāṣil.*

48 A *makhbazah* has a handle (*mazqam*).

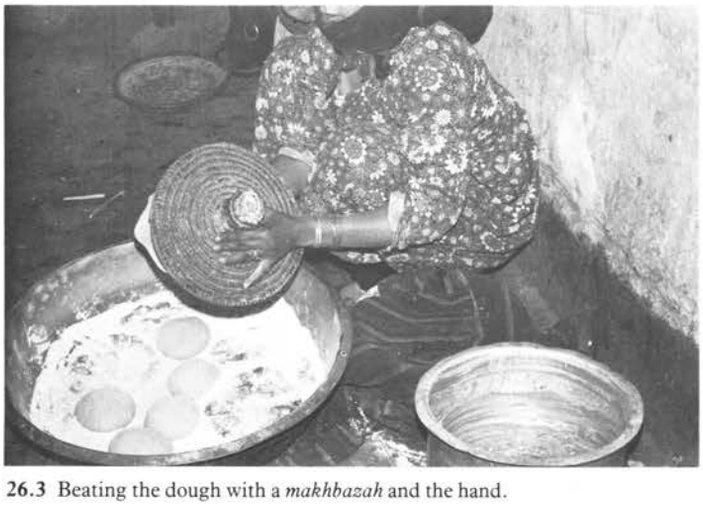
49 The *makhdā*-iron is a flat piece of iron with sharp edges and a hole in the round handle for hanging on a peg. *Khaddā* = to separate from the side of the *tannūr*-oven.

50 The *ghuṭā/ghuḍā* was said to be a tray made of banana-leaf and the head of *dhurah*-cane (*mawz wa-sabūl al-qaṣab*), but this is queried by others.

26.1 Kneading wheat-bread.



26.2 Spreading the dough in a bowl.



26.3 Beating the dough with a *makhbazah* and the hand.

26.4 Trimming the dough on the *makhbazah*.

26.5 Sticking the dough to the side of the *tannūr*.

c The pre-eminence of bread in Yemeni eyes is expressed in the saying, 'Everything a man ordinarily eats, drinks or smokes, says to the round (of bread), "My master" (*Kull al-tawāli'*[51] *taqūl li-'l-qurṣ, "Yā sīdī").*' Nothing a man consumes can replace bread. About a person you know intimately you say, 'Bread and dough made by my own hand, (*khubz yadī wa-'ajīnī*).' Of a person garrulous to no purpose one says, 'He (keeps on) adding water and kneading (*bīlitt wi-yi'jin*).'[52] Talking of a person who attempts to separate two complementary things, one says, 'Bread in Ṣan'ā' and fenugreek in Dhamār (*khubz fi Ṣan'ā' wa-ḥilbah fi Dhamār*).'

'The baker recognizes the face of the man who has had lunch (*Al-khabbāz yi'rif wajh al-mitghaddī*).' He knows who has eaten and who has not. Bakeresses have a bad reputation. Ṣan'ānīs say, 'One bakeress doesn't like another (*Khabbāzah mā tiḥibb khabbāzah*)'. i.e., people of the same craft hate and envy oneanother.

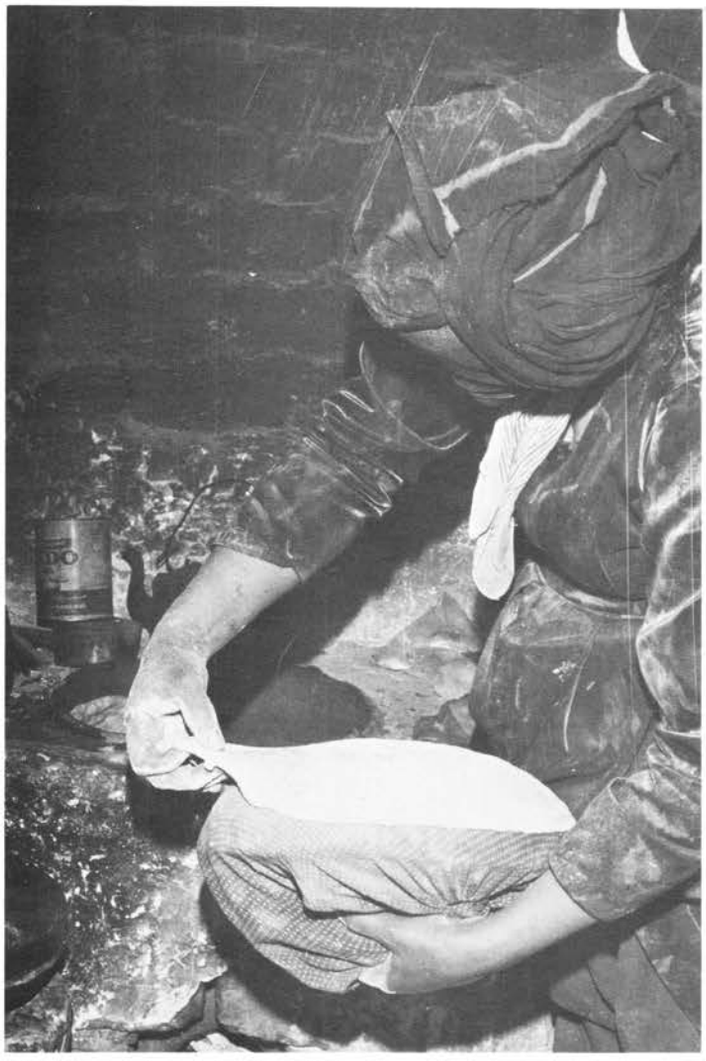
2 *Malūj*[53] *al-birr/burr*, Wheat-bread

We take wheat flour, adding yeast to it, then we add water and knead (it). After kneading it we leave it till it has risen (*law-mā qadūh khāmir*). We light the oven until it is hot (*nlaṣṣi 'l-tannūr law mā qadiyah ḥāmiyah*) and, taking a little dough (*ṣughayrah 'ajīn*)[54] in our hands, we bake them in the *tannūr*-oven until they are cooked (*tundaj*), separate them (*nkhaddī-hā*) with the *makhdā*-iron [from the side of the *tannūr*] and remove them to the basket.

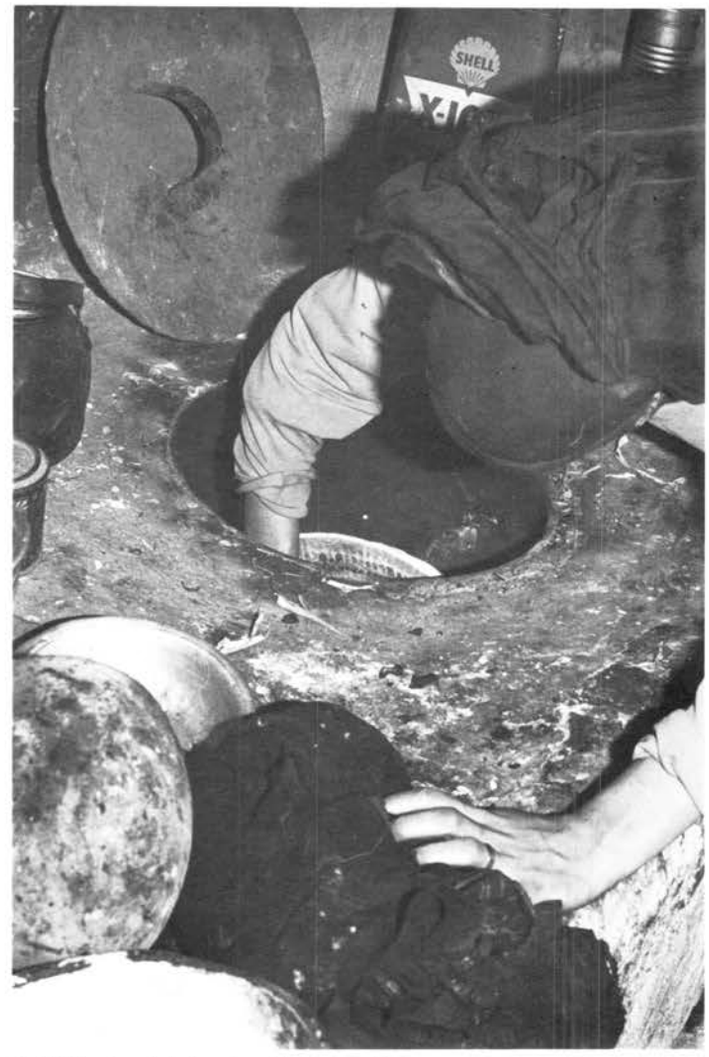
3 *Malūj al-sha'īr*, Barley-bread

a We clean (*nunaqqī*), grind and sieve the barley and, taking a little yeast and salt, knead it with water and let it stiffen a little (*nkhallī-h qāsī shuwayyah*). We heat the *tannūr*-oven and bake it with a little fenugreek (*ḥilbah*). We bake it (*nimlij-ah*) in the *tannūr* until it is ready, removing it with the *makhdā*-iron.

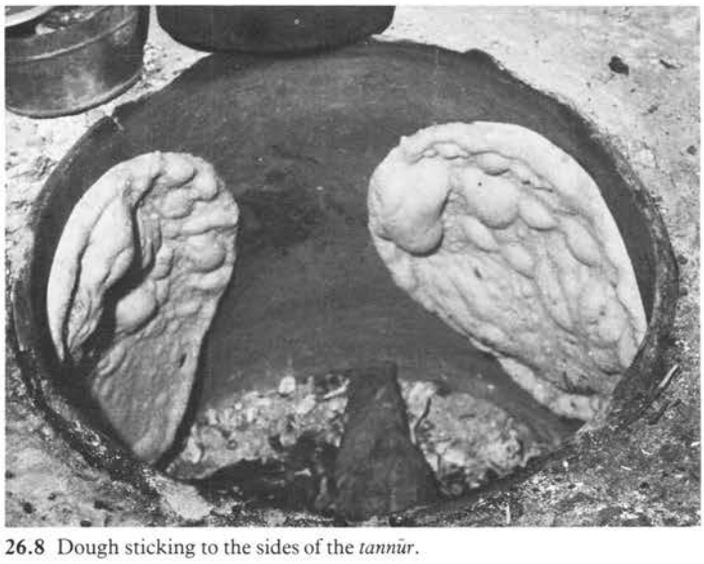
51 Sing., *tawli'ah*. Cf. *mawla'*ī, addict, *habitué*.
52 Qāḍī Ismā'īl al-Akwa', *al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 343, no. 1006. The other proverbs are from his unpublished second volume.
53 Pl. *malālīj*, but Rossi, *L'Arabo parlato*, 159, gives a (collective) pl., *malūj*, sing., *malūjah*.
54 A piece of dough is *'ajīnah*.



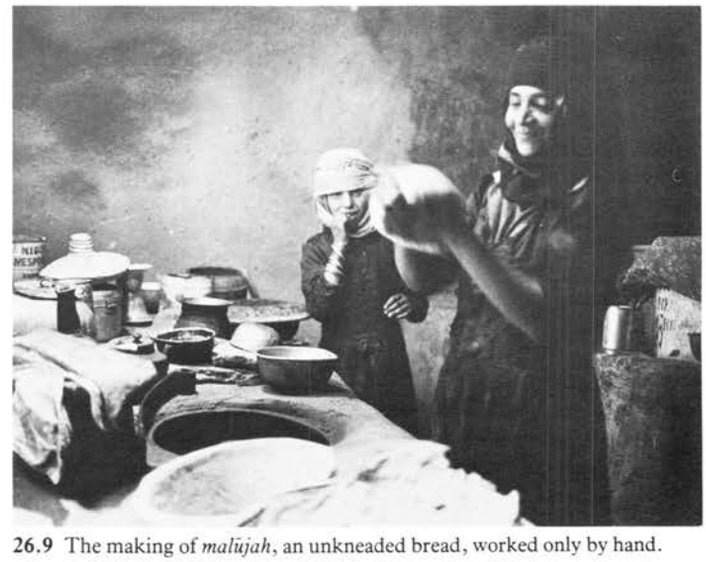
26.6 The dough spread on the *makhbazah*.



26.7 The dough being placed in the *tannūr*.



26.8 Dough sticking to the sides of the *tannūr*.



26.9 The making of *malūjah*, an unkneaded bread, worked only by hand.

26.10 A hand-quern (*maṭḥanat al-yad*).

b 1,000 gms of barley-flour (or wheat [usually as in no. 2 supra, RBS] , or barley and wheat mixed); yeast, salt, water, 5 gms of ground fenugreek seeds soaked in water for some hours (cf. p. 553a).

The risen dough is divided into five balls, each ball smeared with the fenugreek seeds and flipped onto the side of the *tannūr* where it is flattened by hand and baked for three minutes. *Malūj* is eaten, as *khubz,* with any food.

One piece of *malūj*: weight of flour, 200 gms: weight baked 400 gms.

c Yemenis say, 'Fenugreek is the fretted knife of bread (*al-ḥilbah sharīm al-'aysh*).' This is said to mean that fenugreek does to bread what the peasant's fretted knife does to the crop (*al-zar'*), i.e., it cuts, as it were, bread of thick consistency and renders it easier to eat.

A good type of barley used for *malūj* is *saqlah.*

4 *Jaḥīn*[55] of Ground *Dhirah/dhurah*-flour

a We scald it with boiling water (*naṣmuṭ/naṣmuḍ-hā*[56] *bi-'l-fā'ir*) and knead it with a little yeast and salt. After the kneaded flour has risen (*yikhmar*) we take a little ground flour on a plate and cut it into very small pieces (*niqaṭṭi'-ah ṣaghīrah ṣaghīrah*). We then wet our hands with water (*nibill aydī-nā bi-'l-mā'*) and, taking a little ground flour, we work on the pieces of dough (*naf'al li-'l-quṭa' al-'ajīn*). Then we bake them in the *tannūr*-oven until[57] the *jaḥīn* is toasted (*miḥammar*) in the *tannūr*. Then we take them all out (*nibi''id-hin*).

b 850 gms of sorghum flour, some yeast, salt, water. The risen dough is divided into ten balls which are flattened by hand in the *tannūr* and baked for three minutes. The *jaḥīn* is smaller and thicker than *khubz.*

One piece of *jaḥīn*: weight of flour 85 gms; weight baked 170 gms.

c Goitein[58] reports the proverb, 'No dog runs away from a piece of *jaḥīn*-bread (*Mā kalb yihrub min jaḥīnah*).' It seems to mean that if you invite a poor person to eat he will come—he will not turn up his nose at something good. *Jaḥīn* also figures in a common style of proverbial saying, in this instance used in Dhamār and Yarīm.[59] 'A *jiḥīnah* all to myself, not bread-and-honey for me [shared with] others (*Jiḥīnah lī waḥdī, wa-lā sabāyā lī wa-'l-nās*).' *Sabāyā*[60] is a luxury (*min al-ma'kūlāt al-fākhirah*) whereas *jaḥīn* is eaten by most ordinary folk. The tale behind the saying is that a man was married to a pretty woman, but, as Qāḍī Ismā'īl discreetly puts it, discovered that she was not exclusively his own (*khālişah lahu*) and so divorced her. Then he married another woman who was not pretty!

5 *Qafū'*[61] Bread of *Dhurah/dhirah*

a We take a little *dhurah*-flour (*ṭaḥīn*) and, using boiling water, we sprinkle it with it (*naṣmuṭ-ah bah*), knead it, make dough and let it stiffen a little. Then we take a piece [small enough] for our hands [to hold] and bake it (*nidbij*)[62] in the *tannūr*-oven until the latter is full of *qafū'*-bread, in such a way that there is not a strong flame in it (*bi-ḥayth takūn al-tannūr mā bish fi-hā lahbah qawiyyah*), scattering the fire coals (*nifaẓẓ*[63] *al-nār*) until it gets toasted (*law-mā yiḥammirayn*). Then we separate it [from the *tannūr*] with the *makhdā*-iron into the basket (*ghuṭā*).

b 1300 gms of lentil flour (or sorghum and lentil flour mixed), 8 gms yeast, salt, water, 10 gms of ground fenugreek seeds soaked in water.

The lentils are first ground in the quern (*maṭḥan(ah)*) to remove the peel, then ground into a fine flour in the grinding mill. The risen dough is divided into ten balls, each ball is smeared with fenugreek seed and flattened by hand in the *tannūr,* where it is baked for about two minutes. *Qafū'* is a popular bread but less common than the others, since lentils are not always available and the lentil flour requires a long time to prepare. *Qafū'* is eaten with tea or *qishr*-coffee, but not usually with other foods.

One piece of *qafū'*: weight of lentil flour 130 gms; weight when baked 280 gms.

c A proverb in similar style to that on *jaḥīnah,* supra, runs, 'A *qafū'ah* of lentils all to myself, not husked wheat bread for me and others (*Qafū'ah bilsin lī waḥdī, wa-lā khubzah naqiyy lī wa-'l-nās*).'[64]

6 *Laḥūḥ*[65] of Fermented *Dhirah/dhurah*, Pancake Bread

a We grind the *dhirah* and boil a small piece[66] of *'aṣīd*-porridge (*ṣaghīrah 'aṣīd jāhizah*) which is to hand, in water. We take the ground *dhirah*-flour, sieve it and pour it into the kneading-bowl (*niskub-ah li-'l-ma'janah*). We add the *'aṣīd*-porridge and salt to the ground *dhirah*-flour, kneading it with the yeast and adding water to it a little. We knead it until it is runny like water (*law-mā qadūh rākhī sā' al-mā'*) and we leave it to work (*yiqlib* = *yikhmar*)

55 Sing., *jaḥīnah/jiḥīnah.* Cf. Rossi, op. cit., 159.
56 *Ṣamaṭ* explained as 'to burn with boiling water'. One says, *iṣṭamṭaṭaṭ,* she scalded herself. *ṣamaṭ* is also explained as *rashsh* to pour, v.n. *ṣamṭ.*
57 *Law-mā* = *ilā mā.*
58 *Jemenica,* 181, no. 1423, translating *jaḥīnah* as *gesäurtes Dura.*
59 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 404, no. 1202.
60 See Bread dishes, no. 3, infra.
61 Sing. *qafū'ah,* defined by Qāḍī Ismā'īl as *khubz dhura wa-'adas,* and my notes say, bread of lentils, wheat (*qamḥ*) and *quḥṭah sawdā',* black cummin. A solid local bread of *khamīr* (yeast) called *qurmah* (pl., *quram*) was stated to be the same as *qafū'ah.* Cf. Rossi, op. cit., 159.
62 Syn. *nikhbiz.*
63 Explained as *nifarriq.* Class., *faḍḍa,* break asunder, scatter.
64 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished volume, defines *khubzah al-burr* as *al-naqiyy lubb al-burr ba'd izālat qishri-hi.*
65 Sing., *laḥūḥah.*
66 This was explained as 'we take small *nafar*-measures of *'aṣīd* (*nufūr ṣaghīrah*)'. The *nafar* is a sixty-fourth part of a *qadaḥ* (cf. pp. 156-57, n. 141).

with the yeast. We set up the girdle (*nirakkib al-ṣullā*)[67] on the *tannūr*-oven and, taking a little firewood, dung-cakes (*kibā'*) and kindling twigs (*luṣwah*),[68] light (*nish'al*) the *tannūr* so that the girdle may heat up. Taking a little oil (*ṣalīṭ*), we dip the rag in it and grease (*nidsim*) the girdle with it (*nughṭus al-khirqah fih wa-nidihhin bi-ha 'l-ṣullā*) once it has become hot. We now take a gourd-scoop (*madharr*)[69] with holes, a place for two fingers below and for one finger above,[70] into which the big (middle) finger[71] enters. We sprinkle (*nidhirr*) the *laḥūḥ*-pancake [batter] from the gourd-ladle on to the middle (*lā wasaṭ*) of the girdle, covering the top (lit. mouth, *fum* = *laqf*) of the girdle so that the *laḥūḥah*-pancake will cook, and (then) do another one (*niddī thāniyah*).

b 425 gms of sorghum flour, salt, water, 5 gms yeast. The fluid dough is left to rise for about one hour. It is then put in a small can,[72] poured onto a flat disc, and baked for about one minute. *Laḥūḥ* has the shape and consistency of a pancake. It is not baked in every home but only by certain families who sell the bread in the market. *Laḥūḥ* is usually used for making the dish *shafūt*.[73]

One piece of *laḥūḥ*: weight of sorghum flour 85 gms; weight baked 140 gms.

c Al-Hamdānī[74] says of *laḥūḥ*-pancake, 'It is called *al-ṣalīḥ*, bread of *dhurah* on the girdle (*khubz al-dhurah 'ala 'l-ṭābaq*).' So then it was not a new dish in the 4th/10th century. The writer has eaten similar pancake-bread in Addis Ababa. A Yemeni proverb runs, 'If there is no grain, make pancakes (*Idhā mā fish ḥabb liḥḥī*).'[75] It is like the saying attributed to Marie Antoinette—why don't they eat cake? Of a rich man asking someone to make a thing which the latter has not the means to do, they say, 'Make *'aṣīd*-porridge.' She said, 'There is no *dhirah*.' He said, 'Make pancakes.' (*Qāl, 'Sabbirī 'aṣīd.' Qālat, 'Mā bish dhirah.' Qāl, 'Sabbirī laḥūḥ*).'[76] One says, '*Ibrid yā maraq lammā yigī-k al-luḥūḥ*,[77] Wait, Broth, until the Pancakes come to you.' This is an Aden proverb, an injunction not to be too hasty in doing something. It could mean for example—wait till all the bits are assembled here. In all these proverbs it is a woman who is addressed.

Goitein[78] has a Jewish saying, 'Make pancakes for me while I saddle the donkey (*Liḥḥū lī amād mā 'shidd 'ala 'l-ḥimār*).' This is said in mockery rather after the fashion of the previous proverb, for it takes a night and part of the following day to prepare *laḥūḥ*-pancakes. His description of the process of preparing the batter seems to differ slightly from the above.[79]

7 Baps (*kidam*)[80]

Baps (*kidmah*, pl., *kidam*) are made of one of several kinds of flour. They may be of wheat or *dhurah*. There are large bread-ovens (*afrān*)[81] at the Qaṣr al-Silāḥ where they are baked. They are made from the *zakāt*-tax corn that the tribes bring in, for the soldiers, and are distributed to them. One sees them distributed in Ṣan'ā' from a military lorry to 'poor' persons who come and ask for them. *Kidam* are also on sale in the small square in the Sūq north of Masjid al-Madhhab. Annika Bornstein says they are made from a mixture of cereals, depending on the season and the *kidmah* is the typical 'poor man's bread' as it is very cheap.

8 *Faṭīr/faḍīr*[82]

a This is bread of *dhurah*, unleavened (*faṭīr*) as contrasted with *khāmir*, leavened with yeast. Perhaps it is hardly a category on its own.

b Sayings about *faṭīr* include, '*Faṭīr* is better than the Sultan's table (*Faṭīr khayr min simāṭ al-Sulṭān*).' The *simāṭ* is properly the mat or cover upon which food is laid. 'Take a small piece of your unleavened bread (*Khudh min faṭīr-ak 'ās*),'[83] means be content with a little of your provision.

9 *Qurmah* = *qafū'ah* (no. 5 supra and n. 61)

Goitein[84] reports two sayings about the *qurmah*, *Al-quram al-mraddam yiridd al-damm*, Thick *dhurah* bread produces blood. Behind the other saying, *Al-quram afḍal min al-Qur'ān, Dhurah* bread is more important than the Qur'ān, is the story of a *faqīh* who piled up Qur'āns one on top of the other to get at a basket containing the breakfast bread, that was hanging from the ceiling.

Bread Dishes

1 *Al-Fattah* Shredded Bread with Ghee, etc.

a It is [prepared] from bread (*khubz*) itself. We heat the stone bowl (*niḥammi 'l-maqlā*) on the top (lit., *lā wasaṭ*) of the *tannūr*-oven and put a little ghee (*saman*) to it. We now take the piece of bread (*khubzah*) which we put in (*wasaṭ*) the stone bowl and, taking a spoon (*ma'laqah*), we rub it (*nafḥas-hā*)[85] along with the ghee until it is broken up into very small pieces (*tuqaṭṭa' quṭa' ṣughayyirah*). [It is eaten hot.]

b *Fatūt*[86]—2 pieces of *khubz* (170 gms), 100 gms of butter fat, salt, water.

The bread is broken into pieces and heated in a pan with the butter fat, water and salt. *Fatūt* is the common name for any dish prepared with pieces of bread. It may be prepared with butter fat only, eaten with meat soup, or mixed with some other ingredients to make it tasty, e.g., bananas or honey.

c *Fattah*[87] is the same as class. Arabic *tharīd*, a dish that is well known to Tradition. It is the method of using up left-over bread which quickly goes hard in hot countries, or the bread may be kept for use later, and this treatment makes it more palatable.

2 *Al-Shafūt*

a We take *laḥūḥ*-pancakes and put them into shallow bowls (*ṣaḥn*). We crush leeks, mint and a few spices with a rolling-pin (*najurr nizaḥwiq*[88] *al-bay'ah wa-'l-na'na'ah wa-qalīl al-bahārāt*). After crushing this we put it into butter-milk (*naf'al-ah bayn al-laban*), pouring it on top of the *laḥūḥ* in the middle of the bowls.

67 The *ṣullā*, explained as *ṭāwah*, frying pan, is a clay platter with a rim about 10cms high, and has a basket cover with a kind of handle. This is called *ghuṭāyat al-ṣullā*.

68 A piece of firewood of large size is *maḍwā*.

69 Goitein, op. cit., 136, no. 1004, calls it a *ḍarf* also. It was explained as a gourd (*dubbah*) halved, and made into a sort of scoop with holes in the bottom—the cook keeps her fingers stopping these holes till she moves them to release the batter on to the girdle.

70 *Wa-hū mukhazzaq min nāzil, buq'ah thintayn aṣābi', wa-buq'ah iṣba' min 'alāwah allatī tadkhul fih al-iṣba' al-kabīrah*).

71 The middle finger is called *al-maḥqūr*.

72 The *nafar* measure.

73 No. 2 infra, of Bread dishes.

74 This statement was found in an Egyptian edition no longer available to me, of the *Ṣifah*, but it has not been traced in the Leiden or al-Akwa' editions. *Al-Ṣalīḥ* could be read *al-Ṣulayḥ*.

75 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 128, no. 353. To make pancakes, *laḥḥ, yilīḥḥ*. In Shahārah and al-Ahnūm they say *liḥīḥ*.
The *milaḥḥah* in Dathīnah is a thin round stone platter brought from al-Ẓāhir (*Gloss. daṭ.*, 2619), for cooking *luḥūḥ*.

76 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished.

77 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 10, no. 30. *Luḥūḥ* is Aden pronunciation.

78 Op. cit., 136, no. 1004.

79 The recipe calls for 1/8 (*thumānī*) of a *qadaḥ* of *dhirah*. Half of this is crushed and half ground. The half that is crushed (*jashūsh*) is put in water in the evening and ground wet next day in a special small quern. The *dhirah* flour is called *zu'ūf* and the runny dough is called *wulisah* in Ṣan'ā'.

80 Cf. Rossi, op. cit., 159.

81 The *furn* is a proper masonry baker's oven, quite distinct from the *tannūr*.

82 Sing., *faṭīrah*. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, *faṭīrah*, pain sans levain, etc.

83 Both come from Qāḍī Ismā'īl's unpublished proverbs. *'As* is explained as *kasīrah*.

84 *Jemenica*, 119, no. 867, & 120, no. 868.

85 Cf. *Gloss. daṭ.*, 2400, *faḥaṣ*.

86 For *fatūt*, see *Nashr al-'arf*, I, 427; *al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 11, no. 33; Dozy, *Supplement*.

87 Cf. *Gloss. daṭ.*, 2394.

88 The *ja'ār* (possibly *ji''ar/ja''ār* ?) and *masḥaqah* are the round rolling pin and the small flat grinding stone upon which one crushes spices and herbs. One says *masḥaqah* to include both the rolling pin (which is sometimes called *yad al-masḥaqah*) and the *masḥaqah* itself. Rossi, op. cit., 155, gives the latter a plural *mazāḥiq* and the crushing or pounding, *zaḥaq, yisḥaq*.

b 3 pieces of *laḥūḥ,* 350 gms of soured skimmed milk (*laban*), 60 gms leeks, garlic, chillies, thyme.

The spices and herbs are ground together on the *masḥaqah*[89] and mixed with the milk. The pieces of *laḥūḥ* are put in the flat dish and the milk is poured on it. *Shafuṭ* is a popular dish all over the country and a common Ramaḍān food.

3 *Al-Sabāyā*, Wheat Pastry with Ghee and Honey

a We put dough of wheat in the shallow bowl (*ṣaḥn*) and clap it between the hands (*nishnij-ah*). Then we take the ghee and add to it (*naf'al lah*) a little of the dough (in the shape of) long strips (*dhabāyil*)[90] (which we put) onto the round of bread (*'ilāwa 'l-qurṣ*) consisting of pieces of the same dough. We bake it, using the round pillow (*makhbazah*). We remove it with our hands from the middle of the *tannūr*-oven.

b 300 gms of wheat flour, 150 gms butter fat, 170 gms honey, salt, water, yeast.

The risen dough of flour, yeast, salt and water is divided into halves. One half is made into long strips onto which butter fat is poured. The strips are pinched together and put in circles on the breads, which are then flattened on the *makhbazah* and baked in the *tannūr* for about one minute. The baked breads are put in a pan with melted butter fat in between and served with honey.

c Qāḍī Ismā'īl[91] says *sabāyā* is made of heart of wheat (*lubāb al-burr*) mixed with honey and ghee. He considers it one of the choice dishes of the Yemen, as in fact the proverb on p. 548b would indicate. It may be in allusion to this kind of dish that when a marriage agreement has been concluded between two houses nearly related in descent (*nasab*), it is sometimes said, 'We have added honey to the ghee (*Zidnā 'ala 'l-samn 'asal*).' We have added one good thing to another.

4 *Al-Sūsī*,[92] Wheat Bread with Eggs

a We bring the bread to the stone bowl (*maqlā*) when heated, adding to it a little ghee. We mix up (*nukhḍub*) the eggs[93] and sprinkle them little by little on each bread round (*nirishsh-ah 'alā qalīl qalīl li-kull qurṣ*).

b 5 small pieces of *khubz* (200 gms wheat flour), 3 eggs (150 gms), 150 gms butter fat, salt, water.

Two eggs, some of the butter fat, water and salt are mixed and poured between the layers of *khubz* put in a pot (*mathalah*). One egg, black cummin (*quḥṭah*)[94] seeds and the remaining butter fat are put on top of the dish which is heated on the coal in the *tannūr* for some minutes.

5 *Bint al-ṣaḥn* (Daughter of the Bowl), Wheat Flour, Pastry, Eggs and Honey

a A little wheat and ghee, and a little flour (*daqīq*). We mix the eggs, pouring them among the flour (*bayn al-ṭaḥīn*), kneading it with yeast (*khamīrah*) and salt. We take (it), cutting it up into small pieces in the bowl (*lajan*) with a little flour (*ṭaḥīn*), working it (*nishnij-ah*) by clapping it in our hands in the shallow bowls (*ṣuḥūn*). We take the first round (*qurṣ*) and sprinkle it with ghee, and the second, sprinkling it with ghee, and add black cummin to it. We take it to the oven (*firn*)[95] for it to toast and cook (*yiḥammir wa-yunḍaj*). We sprinkle the bowl with honey and ghee.

b 900 gms of white wheat flour, 200 gms of butter fat, 3 eggs (150 gms), 150 gms honey, salt, water.

The ingredients are mixed, using about half the amount of butter fat, and working into a smooth dough. The dough is divided into twenty small balls which are flattened by hand and put in layers in a pan with melted butter fat between the layers. The dish is left to rise for about one hour and then baked on the coal in the *tannūr* for about ten minutes. *Bint al-ṣaḥn* is served with melted butter fat and honey.

6 *Al-Dhamūl*, Fancy Bread made with Eggs

A little wheat flour (*daqīq*) and a little Miṣrī[96] (refined) flour. We take ghee, eggs, black cummin, yeast and salt, kneading the flour and eggs together. We heat the *tannūr*-oven and when it gets red (*wa-law mā yiḥmirr*) we take the pieces of dough and bake them in the *tannūr* until they are ready (*yinḍajayn*) then separate them with the *makhdā*-iron.

7 *Al-Kubānah*, Maize-cake

a We take (*nishill*) a little maize-flour (*al-daqīq al-Rūmī*), a little ghee, a little warm (*dāfi*) water, yeast and a little black cummin. Taking the stone bowl (*madhalah/maqlā*) we turn (*nunkut*)[97] the dough on to the ghee in the stone bowl, and put the eggs on top of the dough and black cummin. We heat (*niḥammī*) the *tannūr* and cover it after putting the stone bowl down below (*nihris*[98] *al-madhalah*) into it amongst the fire coals. We cover the *tannūr,* and stop up (*nisidd*) the gate of the hole [at the foot of the *tannūr*],[99] sealing them up (*nikhtim 'alay-hin*) until they are cooked. When they are ready we remove and turn them out from the stone bowls (*maqālī*) into baskets.

b 430 gms corn flour [*al-daqīq al-Rūmī*], 150 gms butter fat, 1 egg (50 gms), yeast, water.

The flour, yeast, water and some of the butter fat are kneaded together to a smooth dough which is left to rise for one hour. The risen dough is put in a pot smeared with fat. An egg is put on the top and the cake is baked for about thirty minutes on the coal in the *tannūr. Kubānah* is eaten as dessert with tea or *qishr*-coffee.

c Kubānah was also a dish favoured by the Yemeni Jews. At Najrān Halévy and Ḥabshūsh,[100] after the morning prayers, were served the *kubānah,* the traditional Sabbath food. 'It had been kept warm from Friday in a *madhalah,* a stone dish of the kind manufactured at Ṣa'dah, which lends a particularly agreeable flavour to the food preserved in it.' It is described as 'a Saturday dish consisting of dough kept warm from Friday and mixed with soup of melted butter when served.'

8 *Al-Zalābiyā/Zalābiyih*,[101] Flap-jacks

We take wheat (flour) dough, letting it be a little runny (*rākhiyah*). Then,taking the pan (*ṭāwah*),[102] we put into it some sesame oil (*ṣalīṭ al-jiljilān*). We heat it till the oil is boiling (*qad al-ṣalīṭ bīfūr*) and put pieces of the dough into the pan until the

89 'I stir the spices into the butter-milk, *Akhbish/Akhḍub al-zaḥāwiq ma'a 'l-laban*', is the explanation of this sentence.

90 These *dhabāyil* (sing., *dhubālah*), the literal sense being lamp-wick etc., are made when one *yishnij* (verb. noun, *shanūj*) rubs the dough between the hands.

91 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah*, I, 404, no. 1202, and the unpublished section.

92 In Ṣa'dah and the northern districts, but not at Ṣan'ā', there is a dish like *sūsī* called *al-muṭabbaq abu 'l-bayḍ.*

93 Eggs (*bayḍ*) in the masculine gender.

94 Goitein, op. cit., 116, no. 833, has a proverb on *quḥṭah.*

95 A *furn*, colloquially *firn*, as supra, is probably a masonry bread oven and a modern bakery in Ṣan'ā' is also called *firn,* but here it would seem to be used (apparently incorrectly) of the inside of the *tannūr* on top of the coals—when indeed it would be something like an oven.

96 *Miṣrī* is also the name of a variety of wheat introduced into the Yemen and grown there. Australian white flour may be used instead. Before *Miṣrī* flour which they now use the *daqīq al-birr* was called *al-razūm.* They used to *yirzimū-h,* i.e. *yibillū-h wa-yaghsilū-h,* wet and wash it, then *yiṭalli'ū-h al-jibā' fi 'l-shams,* take it up onto the roof-top in the sun. At the *maghrib,* sunset, they would wet it again, wetting in all three times and drying it. They then would grind it with *maṭḥanat al-yad,* the quern, and *yinja'ū-h bi-'l-munkhul al-nā'imah* or fine sieve, also called *al-ṣatītah* or *al-manja'ah.*

97 Syn., *naskub*, Dozy, *Supplément, renverser.*

98 Syn., *ninazzil.*

99 This hole (*manāq*) is for inserting and poking the fuel, as well as making a draught to draw up the fire.

100 *Travels in the Yemen,* ed. S. D. Goitein, Jerusalem, 1941, 93. Cf. E. Brauer, *Jemenitische Juden,* Heidelberg, 1934, 103, passim, who says it was cooked in a *birmah.*

101 Cf. *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 427, for a verse, *Wa-zalābiyā Sharafi 'l-Makārimi inna-hu × wasṭa 'l-ṣiḥāfi sabīkat-un min 'asjadi.* The *zalābiyā* of Sharaf al-Makārim (a *faqīh*), in the large bowl, is an ingot of gold. One says *nizawlab*, we flatter so as to get something. Cf. Rossi, op. cit., 160.

102 Syn., *sāj.*

first side (*wajh*) cooks—when we turn it over with the skewer (*niqlib-ah bi-'l-sinnārah*)[103] so that the other side can cook also. Then we move it on to a shallow bowl (*ṣaḥn*) with the skewer.

9 *Ma'ṣūb(ah)*

Ma'ṣūbah is a kind of the well-known dishes (*aṭ'imah*) with the people of Ṣan'ā'.[104] *Ma'ṣūb* is hot wheat (bread) shredded onto ghee (*al-burr al-sākhin yufatt 'ala 'l-samn*), or as Manzoni[105] describes it, *pezzi di panni messi a ricocere con burro e miele.* In Dathīnah[106] *ma'ṣūbah* is a wheat-flour pancake cooked on a girdle and eaten with a relish (*khuṣār*) of ghee or milk.

A woman is given *ma'ṣūbah* to eat for forty days after she has given birth (see p. 557b).

Dough-porridges

'Aṣīd / 'aṣīṭ;[107] *Dhurah Porridge*

a First of all (*awwal mā bah*) we boil water, sieve the flour (*ṭaḥīn*), put salt in it and, taking a spurtle (*maṭ'am*),[108] stir (*na'ṣar*) (it), pouring the flour among the water, using the spurtle. They[109] thicken it (*yimattinū-hā*)[110] (employing) the spurtle and pour it from the *birmah*-pot into the stone dish (*maqlā*). They pour ghee and broth [on it] after making a little pit (*fajwah*)[111] for the ghee in the middle of it.

b 500 gms sorghum flour (or maize flour), salt, water.

The water is heated in a clay pot (*birmah*), and the flour added under continuous stirring. Some more hot water is added as required until the porridge is thick and smooth. Cooking time is about twenty minutes. *'Aṣīd* is, together with bread, the staple food in the mountain areas, and is eaten almost daily in the villages, less often in the towns.[112]

c *'Aṣīd* is a dish that was common in Arabia from ancient times. Lane notes that it was made of wheat flour, as my notes confirm also for present-day Ṣan'ā', and in a Tradition it is known that it was made in a *birmah*-pot then as now. One says, *' 'Aṣīd* cooked in a jug (*'Aṣīd (waṣaṭ) kūz*)'.[113] This is an impossibility on account of the narrow vase-like neck. The town of Ḥabbān of the former Wāḥidī Sultanate is also teased with cooking *'aṣīd* in a *ku'dah,* a narrow-necked vessel.[114] In the Yemen the saying is applied to an *impasse,* impossible to resolve. An Arab and Jewish saying,[115] *'Aṣīd/'aṣīṭ-ak mattin/mattinī-hā,* Make (m. and f.) your *'aṣīd* properly.' When you make *'aṣīd* or *harīsh* you must mix the water with all of the *'aṣīdah* and stir it thoroughly, or else it will either become lumpy or runny like *maṭīṭ* (see p. 552a). Various applications are given this saying.

Other sayings connected with it are, *'Mā ḥad yi'ādi 'l-'aṣṣādah,* Nobody opposes the woman who makes the *'aṣīd.'*[116] The sense is that one should be careful about a person of whom one is in need. *' 'Aṣīd al-dukhn tinfa' li-'l-muṣabbiḥ,* Bulrush millet is good for a person going out in the morning.' This is because it is heavy in the stomach and keeps away hunger pangs. In Arḥab they say, *'Ammā 'aṣīd am-bilād fa-mā bish mithla-hā,* There is nothing like the *'aṣīd* of the country.' This is in allusion to those who boast of the customs of their own country even if these be bad.[118] The saying, *'Tibdī lak min bayn al-'aṣīd,* It will appear to you from amid the *'aṣīd'*, means that you may meet with harm from a quarter least expected.[119]

A Ṣan'ānī joke at the expense of the (alleged) ignorance of tribesfolk is embodied in the saying, *'Imḍigh-ih, imḍigh-ih, hū sabāyā, hū mā-sh 'aṣīd,* Chew it, chew it, it's *sabāyā* not *'aṣīd*!' The story runs that a villager (*qarawī*) went to Ṣan'ā', taking with him the share (*ḥiṣṣah*) of the crop due to the proprietor (*mālik*) of the land which the villager was cultivating for him, and was entertained by him as is the custom of land-owner and share-cropper (*sharīk/ajīr*). The villager, in voraciousness (*sharāhah*), was gulping down his food without chewing it, so the person next him addressed the above words to him—meaning chew this choice dish (wheat-flour, honey and ghee) slowly, so as to derive the full enjoyment from it, for it is not a little thought of dish like *'aṣīd.* The latter would be the villager's ordinary everyday fare.

Al-Harīsh/harīs, *Wheat Porridge*

a We coarse grind wheat flour (*nijishsh ṭaḥīn al-birr*) in the quern (*maṭḥan*) of the house, not the machine-mill (*al-ṭāḥūn*) of the Sūq, until it turns into small pieces. (Then) we take boiling water with the coarse ground wheat (*jashūsh*), thickening it until it is cooked (*nimtin-hā*[120] *law mā tunḍaj*), and pour it into the stone bowl (*nunkut-hā li-'l-maqlā*). They make a hole in it in the middle of the stone bowl into which we put ghee and broth and eat (it). Or else we put into the hole only honey and ghee.

b 570 gms of coarse wheat flour, 150 gms of butter fat, 150 gms of honey, salt, water.

The grains are coarsely ground in the *maṭḥanah* or in a machine mill. The porridge is prepared as *'aṣīd,* and served with melted butter fat or honey. *Harīsh* is popular but is less common than *'aṣīd* and often served as a feast food.[121]

Gruels and Broths

1 Nashūf, *Wheat and Barley Gruel*

a *Dhurah* or wheat is ground and cooked in butter-milk, to which salt, butter-milk and spices (*ḥawā'ij*) are added, and you have barley-broth that is never absent in the country at any midday meal. Old bread (*luqmah bā'itah*) which cannot be eaten without a condiment (*ṣibgh*)[122] is broken into this broth.[123]

b 350 gms skimmed sour milk, 100 gms of barley flour, 2 pieces of *khubz,* thyme, 100 gms of butter fat, 185 gms of coarse wheat flour, chillies, salt, water, garlic.

The milk, water, and coarse wheat flour[124] are boiled together for about fifteen minutes. The barley flour is then added and the gruel is boiled for another ten minutes. The spices and herbs are ground together on the *masḥaqah,* mixed with the gruel and boiled for another few minutes. The *khubz* is broken to pieces and heated in a pan with the gruel. *Nashūf* is served with melted butter fat.

c Aḥmad Qaryah's list of Ṣan'ā' dishes did not include *nashūf*—it is a dish of the *qabā'il,* uncommon in Ṣan'ā'. Those not well off eat it when unable to afford meat; it is not considered a high dish

103 *Sinnārah*, not a 'hook' here, but a long straight iron skewer.
104 *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 588, 427.
105 *El Yémen*, Roma, 1884, 218.
106 C. de Landberg, *Etudes...*, *Daṯinah*, Leiden, 1905-09, I, 52, 211.
107 Rossi, op. cit., 160, *specie di polenta.*
108 *Maṭ'am* = *'aṣā zaghīrah,* small stick. A *ma'laṭ* is used for stirring/mixing *'aṣīd.* One says, *Imsid/Imsit al-'aṣīd.*
109 The change of subject occurs several times in these accounts.
110 The *'aṣīdah.*
111 Explained as *ghurqah.* In both *'aṣīd* and *harīsh* you make a small *ḥufrah* (pit) in the middle—into this you pour warm ghee (*saman dāfī*) and dip into it the pieces you take from the rest of the dish.
112 Brauer, op. cit., 102, 188 seq., passim, has an account of how the Jews make *'aṣīd* and the *Yawm al-'Aṣīd,* the third day after child-birth when there is a visitation of the mother of the new-born child. See for Ḥaḍramawt, *Prose and poetry...*, 25 seq., a *khuṭbah* (*maqāmah*) on *'aṣīd.* Goitein, *Jemenica,* 100, no. 705, notes *'aṣīṭ, kūbah wa-laban*—which he calls *Dickbrei* of *kūbah,* i.e. cooked, then dried and milled grain of unripe *dhurah.*
113 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished proverbs, says *kūz* = *qillah.*
114 *Prose and poetry...*, 29.
115 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished, and Goitein, op. cit., 101, no. 706.
116 Ibid, unpublished.
117 Ibid, unpublished. *Dukhn* is planted in the hot Tihāmah districts so perhaps this proverb would not be current in Ṣan'ā'.
118 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 225, no. 636.
119 Ibid, I, 350, no. 1025.
120 Syn. *na'ṣar,* we stir.
121 Brauer, op. cit., 103, says that it is prepared as a warm Sabbath dish by the Jews, like *kubānah.* It is mentioned in the food poem in *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 427.
122 For the text's *sibgh* which seems incorrect.
123 *Jemenica,* 163, no. 1261.
124 Made with *jashūsh al-birr,* the ground grain that comes out of the *maṭḥan* (verb, *jashsh, yijishsh-ah*).

which one would offer to a guest. It can be eaten with *'aṣīd, fatūt* or *khubz*. It is given to sick or ailing persons. Goitein quotes a saying, *'Al-nashūf yighaṭṭi 'l-makshūf. Nashūf* covers over the uncovered.' The allusion is to an ugly woman who conceals her ill-favouredness with her dress and ornaments, as *nashūf* covers over stale bread.[125]

2 Al-Maṭīṭ/maḍīḍ, *Barley Gruel*

a We pour butter milk (*laban*) (into a bowl), pound thyme (*sa'tar*), peppers, garlic (*thūmah*) and salt together, and mix in ground barley flour (*ṭaḥīn*). We let this boil, then remove it back from above the fire and pour it into the bowl (*li-'l-ṭāṣah*). We take spoons and sup (*nanshaf*)[126] (it) and take the barley (*luqmah*)[127] and eat it.

b 100 gms of barley flour, 250 gms of sour skimmed milk, salt, 50 gms butter fat, 10 gms thyme, 10 gms garlic, 5 gms chillies.

The milk and flour are boiled together for about twenty minutes. The herbs and spices are ground on the *masḥaqah* and mixed with the gruel just before it is ready. Melted butter fat may be added to the gruel. *Maḍīḍ* is often served with *'aṣīd* by pouring it into a hole made in the porridge, or it is eaten with pieces of bread.

c Qāḍī Ismā'īl defines *maṭīṭ* as gruel (*al-ḥasā'*) which the poor use to season their bread, made generally of barley and ghee, and Rossi,[128] *latte allungato con acqua e bollito con semolino.* The Lower Yemen term for *maṭīṭ* is *zawm*[129] which is a relish/seasoning (*idām*) made of barley flour and butter-milk (*laban al-makhīḍ*). A Tihāmah[130] saying is *Zawmah 'amyā wa-ṭiḥīn majnūnah,* Gruel (made by) a blind woman and flour ground by a crazy one. It is used of bad unfinished work.

3 Al-Shurbah, *Savoury Porridge*

180 gms of coarsely ground wheat flour (or rice flour), 100 gms of butter fat, 350 gms of skimmed sour milk, 70 gms of spring onions, water, salt, pepper.

The flour is boiled with salt in water for about half an hour. The spring onions are finely cut and fried[131] in some of the butter fat and then added to the porridge together with the milk and spices and left to boil for another twenty minutes. *Shurbah* is served with melted butter fat. In the Highland areas, *shurbah* is eaten daily during Ramaḍān instead of *fūl* (beans) which is not eaten during this time, seemingly because it is rather heavy to digest.

4 Al-Lasīs, *Gruel*

a Rossi[132] calls *lasīs* flour of cereals seasoned with salt and parsley (*prezzemolo*) specially advised for children, and Qāḍī Ismā'īl simply calls it grain (*ḥabb*) boiled with water.

b A proverb runs, *'Idda lī wa-addī lak, wa-liss lī aqlī lak,* Give me and I'll give you; make me *lasīs* and I'll fry for you.'[133] This seems to mean—You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.

5 Maraq, *Broth*

Maraq is simply the water in which any flesh is boiled with the spices (*ḥawāyij*), fat and morsels of the flesh. A spoon of pumpkin (*dubbā*) called *shaqfah* is used for ladling the *maraq*.

'Take the top of broth and the end of coffee, *'Alay-k bi-awwal al-maraq wa-ākhir al-qahwah,*' runs a proverb.[134] The top of broth is better than the bottom of the pot because of the fatty bits of meat (*dusūmāt al-laḥm*) which collect on the top, but the end of *qishr al-bunn* is sweeter and tastes better than the first sips of it.

6 'Adasiyyah, *Lentil Broth with Bread*

a We take lentils (*bilsin*) and coarse grind them until they split in half (*wa-najishsh-ah*[135] *law mā yaqa' anṣāf*). In them we put all the spices (*bahārāt*) along with the leeks (*bay'ah*). They add the *'uluṭ*[136] which consists of ground barley flour (*ṭaḥīn al-sha'īr*).

With a rolling pin they crush (*yizaḥwiqū*) the spices along with the leeks. They leave the coarsely ground [lentil] flour (*al-jashūsh*) until it boils and put the spices and leeks to boil along with it until cooked. It can either be eaten (*immā an yu'kal*) with bread (*luqmah*) such as *fatūt,* or without bread.

b Two pieces of *khubz* (170 gms wheat flour), 200 gms of husked lentils, 200 gms of barley flour, 50 gms of butter fat, 20 gms of leeks, 5 gms of garlic, salt, water, pepper.

The lentils are lightly ground in the *maṭḥanah* to remove the husk. The barley flour and the lentils are boiled in water for about half an hour. The leeks are ground in the *masḥaqah* together with the spices, mixed with the gruel and boiled together for a short while. The gruel is then heated in a pan with the *khubz* broken into small pieces and served with [a little] melted butter fat.

7 Bir'ī,[137] *Chick-pea Broth*

We take a little of chick-peas (*'atar*),[138] potash (*ḥaṭum*),[139] thyme, chillies (*bisbās*)[140] and salt. To it we add a little black potash (*naf'al zughayyirah ḥaṭum aswad*). We boil it until it is cooked (*nāḍij*), (then) taking a little ground *dhurah* flour (*ṭaḥīn*), we mix it in with the chick-peas (*nu'alliṭ-hā ma'a 'l-'atar*) and taking the stirring spoon (*mamhad*)[141] we stir it in with it (*nimhad/nimhat-hā bah*) in the pot (*wasṭ al-tast*)[142] until the chick-peas thicken into a paste (*yitfarqaṣ*)—and so on.

8 Shabīsah, *Pap*

This should probably not really be considered as a dish! It can be pap of rice and butter.[143] It is for infants, a *Kinderbrei* of *Mehl und Samn,*[144] administered from a *manshūq/manshūqī,* and may be flour of any grain boiled with a little water and *samnah.*

125 *Jemenica,* loc. cit.
126 *Maṭīṭ* is drunk or eaten with a spoon like *nashūf.*
127 *Luqmah* means anything of the bread variety, barley or wheat, etc. Cf. Rossi, 159, Brauer, 101, it also being used by the Jews in this sense. One speaks of *luqmat al-qahwah,* crisp bread eaten with coffee.
128 Op. cit., 160.
129 Cf. 'The cultivation of cereals', 30, for *zawm.*
130 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished.
131 Aḥmad Qaryah commented, *'Ind mā tiḥimmir al-buṣālah/burāṣah ma'a 'l-samn yuqāl lah al-kushin,* When you brown (red) onions/spring onions with ghee, it is called *kushin.*
132 Loc. cit.
133 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 54, no. 157. *Lass, yiliss,* to make gruel.
134 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished.
135 To a girl would be said, *Sīrī jishshī lana 'l-bilsin,* Go and remove the husk (*qirshah*) of the lentils for us/me.
136 *'Uluṭ* seems to mean 'a mixture' as in the next following no. 6. *'allaṭ* means 'to mix', cf. *mal'aṭ* supra.
137 Also *bira'ī/bara'ī* (Rossi, loc. cit.).
138 *Gloss. daṭ.* also gives the sense *petits pois* which is a common usage.
139 Also pronounced *huḍum* and *ḥuṭum* as in E. V. Stace, *English-Arabic vocabulary,* London, 1893, 127, who states that it is made from burning the *'aṣal* plant (v. *Gloss. daṭ.,* 2300) and used for washing clothes. Yemenis described it as a black stone crumbled up, put in a cloth (*khirqah*) and inserted for dye and taste, then taken out again.
140 It seems that the thyme and chillies are prepared in a separate pot and added according to taste.
141 A *mamhad* is used for mixing *fūl* and *'atar.* A large type of copper spoon used for ghee is called *mallās ḥaqq al-saman. Nimhad* (= *nafḥas*) *al-fūl aw al-'atar,* we rub broad beans or chick-peas till they become *mufarqaṣah* (= *mufaṭṭatah*) like dough (*'ajīn*).
142 Usually nowadays an aluminium pot, *ṭast, dust,* etc.
143 Rossi, loc. cit.
144 Brauer, 191, seq., where it is mentioned in a children's ditty. The *manshūqī* is a small infant's feeding bowl.

Vegetable Stews (*ṭabīkh / ḍabīkh*)

In the Yemen, in Ṣan'ā' itself, there are various kinds of vegetable stew (*ṭabīkh/ḍabīkh*), such as ladies' fingers (*bāmiyā*), beans (*fāṣūliyā*), rice, potatoes (*baṭāṭah*), spring onions (*burāṣah*) and pumpkin (*ḍubbah*).[145] They are cooked in the same way. The best known and characteristically Yemeni dish of these is fenugreek (*ḥilbah*).

1 Ṭabīkh, *Stew*

100 gms ladies' fingers, 250 gms of potatoes, 100 gms of tomatoes, 70 gms of spring onions, 50 gms of butter fat, garlic, salt, pepper.

The onions are fried in fat. The spices and the other vegetables are added with some water and boiled until soft for about 45 minutes. No water is discarded.

2/i Ḥilbah/ḥulbah, *Fenugreek*

a We take ground fenugreek flour (*dhirār*[146] *al-ḥilbah*), a quantity of a couple of spoonfuls (*qadr mal'aqatayn*), fetch two cupfuls (*barādiq*) of water, putting them in a bowl (*ṭāṣah*) for a short time—about three hours or more. After this we dry out the water (*ninazniz*[147] *al-mā'*) from it and whip it with our fingers (lit. hands)[148] until it rises (*tantafikh*).[149] We taste it (*naṭ'am-hā*)—if a little bitterness (*qabābah*)[150] still remains in it, we whip it a second time until there no longer remains any bitter taste in it.

After this we crush (*nizaḥwiq*) leeks (*bay'ah*) and spices for it on the *masḥaqah* with water putting (*nuḥuṭṭ-ah*) them in the fenugreek and whipping it, just a little, once more.

After this we fetch meat broth and vegetable stew (*ṭabīkh*) in the stone bowl (*maqlā*), heated up, add a little fenugreek to it, mixing it with the broth, and eat it.

b 15 gms of ground fenugreek seeds, 60 gms of leeks, 3 gms of chillies, 3 gms of garlic.

The ground fenugreek seeds are soaked in water for about four hours. The water is discarded and the seeds are whipped by hand[151] until white and frothy. The leeks and spices are ground together and added to the sauce. *Ḥilbah* is a popular and common food all over the country. It is eaten by dipping pieces of meat or fresh vegetables into it. The leeks and spices are sometimes replaced by vinegar and the sauce is then called *ḥāmiḍah.* Horse radish dipped into *ḥāmiḍah* is a typical Ramaḍān food.

2/ii Al-Ḥāmiḍah/ḥilbah ḥāmiḍah

a One pours vinegar on to some of the *ḥilbah* in another pot, this being eaten before the meal. Horse radish (*fijl*) is dipped in the fenugreek and eaten. The other part of the *ḥilbah* is eaten at the end of the meal with bread.[152]

b Al-Ḥāmiḍah is a little *ḥilbah,* salt, sugar and some vinegar (*khall*) which is made from raisins. We mix it all together, and take horse-radish (*qushmī/fijl*)[153] and eat it.

c Ḥilbah figures in proverbial sayings quoted supra in connection with *Khubz* and *Malūj* (p. 545b infra). Goitein[154] quotes an expression, *Sinīn al-ḥilbah,* So long as (lit. the years of) *ḥilbah* last. This is in allusion to the fact that it does not go bad unless it is ground when it becomes bitter in three weeks. *Wannaw-ni/wannaw lī wa-'na' sha-'khbish al-ḥilbah,*[155] Help me and I shall stir the fenugreek, is said of a man who undertakes a piece of work but does himself perform only the simple part, leaving the main or essential part to others.

Al-Wāsi'ī[156] says the ground spices and vegetables (*khuḍār*[157] *masḥūqah*) comprise mint (*waraq al-na'na'ah*), coriander (*kuzbarah*), leeks, salt, chillies (*bisbās*) and some cummin—if fresh ones (*al-khuḍār al-ṭariyyah*) are lacking then dry *khuḍār* can be used pounded, with water added. Goitein's[158] list comprises *bisbās, ḥawā'ij khaḍrā',* lit., green spices, i.e. coriander, *ḥawā'ij sawdā',* black spices, i.e. pepper (*fulful ḥabb*), cardamom (*hayl*), salt, cummin (not essential), garlic. The writer has many a time seen tinned Italian tomato puree, poured into *ḥilbah* and mixed with it, sometimes along with the remains of dishes that came earlier in the meal.[159] Al-Wāsi'ī attributes to fenugreek the properties of aiding digestion, bodily health, (sexual) power, clearing obstructions and driving away pain. He advises that two broad beans (*fūl*) and a sprig (*'ūd*) of fenugreek be put in the above mixture before it is pounded up.

3 Al-Saltah[160]

Saltah is *ḥilbah* with broth (*maraq*) and vegetable stew (*ṭabīkh*). This term was said to be *kalām al-Mashriq,* of the dialect of the Mashriq, but it is used in Ṣan'ā'. It is derived from *salat, yaslut,* to scoop up *ḥilbah* with pieces of bread.

4 Al-Qillah/fūl, *Broad Beans*

a 300 gms of broad beans, 100 gms of butter fat, 100 gms of tomatoes, 5 gms garlic, 3 gms of chillies, salt, water.

The beans are soaked in water overnight, then boiled for several hours in salted water and fat. The spices and tomatoes are boiled with the stew for the last half hour. *Fūl* is a common breakfast dish, eaten with pieces of bread. During Ramaḍān *fūl* is not usually eaten but replaced by *shurbah.*[161]

b Tinned Egyptian *fūl mudammas* is now widely sold in the sūqs. It is to be distinguished from *fūl Sūdānī,* ground-nuts, known in the Yemen as *al-ḥabb al-'azīz.*

Of proverbial dicta Qāḍī Ismā'īl[162] cites, *'Law mā taḥwī qillāyah,* ' "If" isn't worth a bean.' One says, *'Mā 'ind-ah qillāyah,* or, *Mukhkh-uh mithl al-qillāyah,* He hasn't got a bean (of intelligence), or, His brain is like a bean.' Goitein[163] gives *'Qillah Yamānī, s'ad zamānī,* When I have Yemeni broad beans my time is happy.' A Jewish proverb says that *qillah*-beans are indispensable for the Sabbath.

145 The cow-pea, *vigna sinensis* (*dijrah/tijrah*) does not seem to be highly esteemed, according to *al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah* I, 33, no. 93. Cf. *Jemenica,* 152, no. 1148, 'When the food is flavourless, then welcome o cow-pea, *Ma'a 'l-kafa' yā ḥayya 'l-dijrah.*' In Ṣan'ā' the word *kafa'* does not seem known, but *dhirah* is described as *kāfiḥah,* tasteless without sour milk (*laban*). Goitein gives ghee as an alternative seasoning to it. It is served as a mush (*maṭīṭ*), boiled with salt but without spices (*bahārāt*). At the season (*mūsim al-dijrah*) it is eaten for amusement (*li-'l-tasliyah*) especially by children and women. According to Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥaydarah, *Ṭawālī' al-Yaman al-zirā'ī,* Ta'izz, 1971, *dijrah* is gathered from Kānūn II, 20/February, 2.

146 Syn. *ṭaḥīn al-ḥilbah.*

147 *Naznaz* means *ninashshif al-mā' min al-ḥilbah,* we dry the water out of the fenugreek. One says to a girl, *Rūḥi uḍrubi 'l-ḥilbah,* Go and (lit.) beat the fenugreek (to get the bitterness out of it).

148 See n. 151 infra.

149 Syn. *tishtabb,* expands, or *tishbī,* rises.

150 Syn. *ḥamūḍah.*

151 Al-Wāsi'ī, *Tārīkh al-Yaman,* 299, says it is beaten with a spoon for ten minutes, till it becomes white. They pour off the water (*yishinnū*), and the more they stir it the more it expands till it fills the stone *maqlā.* Cf. Goitein, *Jemenica,* 171.

152 Ibid, loc. cit.

153 *Fijl* in Ṣan'ā' is not used of white radish, though it is used in other parts of the north, but it would be understood in Ṣan'ā'.

154 *Jemenica,* 86, no. 575 and 171, no. 1336.

155 Loc. cit.

156 Loc. cit.

157 Vegetables in Ṣan'ā' are called *khuḍrah* (plur. *khuḍar*), e.g., *nishtarī khuḍrah.* For the tax on vegetables (*ḍarībah al-mukhaḍḍar*), see p. 158a.

158 Loc. cit.

159 Cf. Ameen Rihani, *Arabian peak and desert,* London, 1930, 157. He mentions particularly *bisbās,* pepper which is perhaps most important of all.

160 *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 427, shows this term was known in the latter 11th/17th century.

161 Annika Bornstein's description.

162 Unpublished. A *qillāyah* is *ḥabbah wāḥidah min al-fūl al-maqliyy.*

163 Op. cit., 123, no. 884. Cf. ibid, 130, 957, *al-qillah al-mathriyyah,* steeped beans, and a discussion of types of bean known to the Yemen. *Qillah* native to the Yemen is distinguished from the Turkish introduced *fāṣūliyā* by a dark strip. *Qillah* is the name for the dried bean which when fresh is called *qarānī'* (sing., *qurna'ī*). It is eaten cooked in the pod (*qirshah*) like *dijrah* at the season *mūsim al-qarānī'.* Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥaydarah, *Ṭawālī' al-Yaman al-zirā'ī,* says green *fūl qarānī'* is found from/about Tammūz 6/August 19.

5 Al-Zaḥāwiq/saḥāwiq, *Hot Sauce*[164]

a 100 gms of tomatoes, 3 gms garlic, 3 gms chillies.

The fresh tomatoes are ground on the *masḥaqah.* The sauce is eaten with pieces of bread, boiled potatoes or other boiled vegetables.

b Arab informants say it is prepared from tomatoes, leeks (*bay'ah*) and *bahārāt,* spices—perhaps the latter term covers the red *bisbās* and green *filfil* peppers used.

c What is pounded (*suḥiqa*) is called *zaḥāwiq.*

A woman would say to her daughter, *'Yā bintī izḥaqi 'l-bay'ah,* My daughter, pound the leeks.' To which the girl would reply, *'Nāhī, yummī,* Yes, mother.'

6 Al-Sha'īriyyah, *Sippets*

Sha'īriyyah is used in *ḥilbah* or stew (*ḍabīkh*) and is prepared as follows.

We knead a little ground flour and twist[165] it with our hands into small pieces (*nibrim-ah wa-niftil-ah*) on to the basket (*li-awsaṭ al-ghuṭā'*), leaving them until they dry (*law mā tibas/dibas*).[166] Then we toast them on the tin tray (*wa-ba'dā niḥammir-hā fi 'l-tabsī*)[167] over the fire coals. We set to warming (*najurr niḥammī*) the stone *maqlā,* adding a little (*naf'al ṣighayyarah min*) ghee, a little boiling (water) and salt. We boil it until the water dries off it (*yinizz*[168] *minn-ah*) and it is cooked. Then we eat it.

Another version calls it a piece of wheat dough (*'ajīnah*) formed into little shapes like rice. They make it round (*yibawrim-ah*).[169] It is described as like macaroni.

Al-Ṣalaṭah / Salatah, Salad

Salad seems to be a recent introduction to the Yemen, and in Ettore Rossi's glossary neither 'salad' nor 'tomatoes' figures among the entries. *Ṣalaṭah* may be derived from the Italian *insalata.*

It consists of small pieces of tomato (*ṭamāṭim*), red onion (*buṣālah*) and some vinegar (*khall*)[170] along with salad leaves (*waraq al-ṣalaṭah,* lettuce). It is used with *shufūt* or so (*hākadhāk,* by itself).

The *buṣālah* onion is not hot tasting (*faḥḥah*). The leaves of the horse radish (*qushmī* = *fijl*) which is hot to taste, are also eaten.

Spices

A distinction was made between *bahārāt* spices which were said to be garlic (*thūmah*), chillies (*bisbās*) which are hot to taste (*fuḥḥ*),[171] thyme (*sa'tar*), coriander (*kabzarah*), and *ḥawāyij/ḥawāyig.* The latter are said to be of two sorts, those used in broth (*maraq*) and those used with coffee.

Other spices are cardamom (*hayl*), cinnamon (*qirfah*), cloves (*zirr*), cummin (*kammūn*), ginger (*zinjabīl*), mint (*na'nā'*), parsley (*baqdanūs* = Class. *baqdūnis*), saffron (*za'farān*). Black cummin (*ḥabbah sawdā'*) is also known as *shūnīz.*[172]

The *madall* container for water to drink at *qāt* sessions is perfumed by heating a little piece of *ḥaraḍ* stone, a round piece called *fals* upon which are placed special spices and incense called *bakhūr mā',* and as they roast the *madall* is censed with them and the water poured into it. *Bakhūr mā'* consists of *'ūdah,* Jāwī aloes-wood, cardamom (*hayl*), cloves (*zirr*) and a very little sugar. In Ḥaḍramawt glasses for water are censed in much the same way.

Ma'ribī[173] rock salt is known in Ṣan'ā' but at present they mostly use salt produced at Ṣalīf.

Cakes

1 Al-Ka'k (*sing.*, ka'kah), *Cake*

We take a little ground flour (*ṭaḥīn*) along with eggs, yeast, salt, a little hot water (*min al-dāfi'*) and ghee. This we knead and cut into small pieces in a *tabsī*-tray and take it to cook (*li-yinḍaj*) in the oven (*firn*).

Goitein[174] says the ingredients are flour, eggs, oil or ghee and black cummin (*quḥṭah sawdā'*). The dough which is made sour is formed into rounds (*yiqarruṣū-hun aqrāṣ*). It is baked on the side of the oven which is covered with the clay cover (*ksāwah*). A proverb runs, *'Mā yiddaw-sh ka'k wa-asnān,* They don't bring cake and teeth together.' Cake is hard and needs good teeth.

2 Al-Sha'ūbiyyāt,[175] *Sweet Bread*

We knead flour (*daqīq*), cut it up into small pieces on the *tabsī*-tray and take them to the oven (*firn*). We let them cool (*nibarridhin*) and add sugar-water to them (*naf'al-hin al-shurūb*). *Shurūb* also called *al-shīrah* is sugar and water boiled together and poured over the *sha'ūbiyyāt.*

3 Al-Rawānī/rawwānī,[176] *Cake*

We mix eggs, flour (*ṭaḥīn*), ghee and a little of baking soda (*karbūnah*), knead it [into dough], place it on a *tabsī*-tray or a shallow bowl (*ṣaḥn*) and take it to the oven (*firn*). After it is cooked we add *shurūb* to it like (we do with) *sha'ūbiyyāt* and it is cut with a knife (*sikkīn*).

Aḥmad Qaryah said the ingredients also included yeast (*khamīrah*) and salt of alum (*milḥ al-shabb*).[177] This is naturally a rather expensive dish.

4 Baqlāwāt *and* Qaṭā'if

These pastries although obviously introduced from the Ottoman Empire, are said to differ a little from their Turkish counterparts.

Meat

Introduction

Meat, commonly called *shirkah* as already explained,[178] is mutton (*ghanamī*) of sheep or goat, or beef (*baqarī*), the former being greatly preferred. If one is to take it literally, a proverb, *'Aṣab al-bil wa-lā shaḥm al-baqar,*[179] Tendons of camel (meat) rather than beef fat,' shows that tribesmen of Ṣirwāḥ prefer the worst camel meat to the juiciest beef. When in the Mashriq the writer found that the tribes there would not cook their meat till tender since they liked to tear at it with their teeth. A ram's head

164 *Saḥāwiq* is Annika Bornstein's spelling, and it could be correct, from *saḥaq* = *zaḥaq. Zaḥaqt-ah* = *faḥast-ah.*

165 It is twisted between the thumb and fore-finger.

166 Sic, but the longer form *tības* is also used.

167 A *tabsī* is a large tin (*tanak*) tray with edges, Turkish *tepsī.*

168 Syn. *yinshaf.* Cf. *Gloss. dat., suinter.*

169 To this strange form of verb may be compared the Ṣan'ānī adjective *muṭawṭal* = *ṭawīl,* long, *mudawramah,* rounded.

170 Made from local grapes and on sale in the markets.

171 Mashriq pronunciation. Hot = warm is simply *ḥarr.*

172 Cf. section 'Aromatic plants' in *Western Arabia and the Red Sea,* B.R. 527 Geographical Handbook Series, Naval Intelligence Division, Oxford, June 1946, 597.

173 The Prophet is said to have made an *iqṭā',* perhaps to be rendered 'grant' of Ma'rib salt to a certain Abyaḍ b. Ḥammāl.

174 *Jemenica,* 142, no. 1062; Rossi, op. cit., 160, sweet of sugar, eggs, flour and butter.

175 It was suggested that the name of this sweet bread might be that of a family which made it. The Bayt Barakāt, a family originally Turkish, is renowned even today for making *al-rawānī.*

176 Qaryah remarked that *rawānī* had 'nearly a *tashdīd*' and could be pronounced *rawwānī.* My notes say it is like cake with powdered sugar.

177 Dozy, *Supplement* and other lexicons give *shabb* the meaning of a sort of alum. Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān,* ed. M. J. de Goeje, *BGA,* Leiden, 1906, 36, *shabb Yamānī.*

178 Cf. p. 234; Rossi, op. cit., 159.

179 *'Aṣab* = *aṭnāb al-mafāṣil,* Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished proverb.

is to be preferred to a (woollen) sackful of locusts (*Rās al-kabsh wa-lā ghirārat jarād*)![180]

There is a great lore in south west Arabia concerned with meat ranging from knowledge of the various sorts and qualities of meat,[181] parts of the animal, division of meat to guests,[182] to slaughtering on ritual occasions and such social usages as the offering of *'aqīrahs* in a variety of circumstances. Something of this figures from time to time in earlier chapters of this volume. A strange tale,[183] not easy to interpret, makes the claimant to prophecy in Ṣan'ā', Abu 'l-Aswad al-'Ansī, slaughter a hundred cattle or camels untethered behind a line he had drawn on the ground; perhaps these were *'aqīrahs*. At the *samsarah* of al-Ḥayfah of Arḥab in 1966 meat brought to the writer and his escort (*khubarā'*) included the penis (*zubb*) of the animal which, in Islamic food law, would not be eaten. With the broad humour of country folk one of the escort took it to the women of the *samsarah,* causing great merriment all round, explaining that the women should have it because they are *ahl-ah*. When, in 1972, we were entertained by the Bukhaytī shaykhs of the Hadā raw liver was brought to us and they themselves ate part of the stomach raw.

Annika Bornstein merely notes that beef (meat) and chicken are usually boiled and sheep meat sometimes is fried. All parts of the animal are eaten and the brain, liver (*kabid*) and kidney (*kilwah*) considered special delicacies. Such meat dishes or ways of cooking meat as have come to notice are the following, but it is not claimed that the list is complete.

Preparation of Meat

1 *Al-Daqqah*, Chopped-up Beef Stew

We boil water and taking a little onion (*baṣal*), a few leeks (*bay'ah*) and spices (*bahārāt*), knead one into the other [mix them with the chopped-up beef]. We let the water boil in the *birmah*-pot and, squeezing them (the pieces of beef ?) together in our hands into small pieces (*nijammiz-hā*[184] *'alā qiṭa'*) [drop them] into the pot into the boiling water until they cook.

The small pieces of meat are called *kubaybāt/kubayyibāt* [185] and seem to be minced or chopped up into a *daqqah* and a little salt added. *Kubaybāt* were also described as minced/chopped/hashed meat and meat balls with onions (*al-laḥm al-mafrūm wa-'l-kubbah*) fried with oil and ghee.

2 *Al-Qazāqiz*, Fried Mutton-fat

This is rump and tail fat (*ilyah/tharbah*)[186] of sheep-or-goats (*ṭaliyy*) cut into small pieces and fried. The name is derived from the sound of ghee or oil frizzling over the fire (*al-qazqazah 'ala 'l-nār*), the verb being *taqazqaz*. When the *jazzār* sells lamb he throws in a small piece of fat (*ṣughayyarah min al-tharbah*). *Qazāqiz* are eaten especially at 'Id 'Arafah. Because they are soft with no bones people say, *Wa-'l-qazāqiz li-'l-'ajāyiz, Qazāqiz* are for old (toothless ?) women.

3 *Al-Qaliyyah*

Al-Wāsi'ī[187] avers that 'when meat is well cooked it can go about six months without turning bad (*yataghayyar*). In Ṣan'ā' this meat is called *al-qaliyyah*.' This seems to reflect al-Hamdānī's[188] statement that in Ṣan'ā', and Ṣan'ā' alone, meat cooked with vinegar and left in a covered pot can remain as fresh as on the day it was cooked for up to two months—one finds it solid (*jāmid-an*) and re-heats it. *Qaliyyah*[189] was explained as meat full of fat (*dasam*).

4 *Al-Dawākhil*, Offal

The *dawākhil* are the lungs and heart. If they do not eat them on their day (that on which the animal is slaughtered) they go bad and are unlawful, not fit for eating (*Idhā lam ya'kulū-hā fa-hiya 'arbīt*[190] *wa-tiḥrum wa-lā tuṣluḥ li-'l-akl*). Lungs are usually fed to cats.

5 *Ḥaḍīḍ*, Soup

Ḥaḍīḍ is meat soup with a covering of pepper (*shaṭṭah*) and black *filfil* pepper.

6 *Qūzī*, [191] Young Lamb

The *qūzī* (a Turkish word for lamb) can be boiled in broth (*maraq*) with spices (*bahārāt*), or else be roasted in a *tannūr*-oven when the fire-coals have been removed and the *qūzī* put into it. In the latter case it is known as *jarshab.*

7 *Ḥanīdh*

Ḥanīdh, meat roasted in the *tannūr* with the top and bottom of it closed.

Sweets (*ḥalāwā*, pl., *ḥalawiyāt*) and Desserts

1 Al-Muḥallabiyyah;[192] *Jelly*

a We boil water with sugar, mixing in a little milk (*ḥalīb*), starch (*nasha'*), cardamom (*hayl*), cloves (*zirr*) and a little rosewater (*māward*) until it boils. Then we remove it from over the fire and put it into shallow bowls (*ṣuḥūn*) in a cooling window (*bayt sharbah = al-shubbāk ḥaqq al-mā'*) for water.

b 50 gms of cornflour, 100 gms skimmed milk powder, 250 gms sugar, water, cinnamon, cloves.

The sugar and spices are boiled in water. The milk powder and starch flour are sieved into the water and boiled for a short time under continuous stirring. *Muḥallabiyyah* is served cooled, after meals, as a dessert.

c The sugar used is of the *Miraysī* (Rossi,[193] *Mrayyisī*) type, the name said to mean coming from Marseilles (but see n. 203). Fine powdered sugar is *baththh*, and *nabāt* is expensive sugar crystals in the form of *muka"abāt*, used with *'innāb* spices in coffee.

2 Al-Bālūzah[194]

This is said to be a kind of *muḥallabiyyah* without milk. It is probably the Perso-Turkish *pālūdah,* a kind of jelly or blancmange.

3 Mulawwazah

This is a sweet made of sugar and almonds (*lawz*).[195]

4 Luqūm

This sweet is made of flour, almonds and sugar.[195]

180 Ibid.
181 For example our companions in 1978 were eager to stop in Bayt al-Faqīh because of the excellent mutton of the district.
182 Cf. *South Arabian hunt,* London, 1976, 30.
183 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ed. de Goeje et alii, Leiden, 1879 ff., I, IV, 1864 & 1995.
184 *Jammaz,* to grasp in the hands, syn., *lamaz,* imper., *ilmiz.*
185 This dish figures in the poem cited above, p. 313b, n. 34.
186 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 140, no. 384, indicates that the *tharbah* is the choice part, and the *bu'ṣūṣ,* the tail-bone joined to the spinal cord is the poorest part. *Wadak*, rendered fat (*samn*) of *shaḥm al-ghanam*, i.e., *al-tharbah*, is also called *al-dihn ḥaqq al-qazāqiz.*
187 *Al-Badr al-muzīl li-'l-ḥazn...*, Cairo, 1345 H., 8.
188 *Ṣifah,* 197.
189 In the Tihāmah *qaliyyah* is not meat, but fried/toasted grain (*al-ḥabb al-maqliyy al-muḥammaṣ*).
190 Sic, but equivalent to class. *'aribat.*
191 Cf. *Nashr al-'arf,* I, 427, etc.
192 Cf. Rossi, op. cit., 160.
193 Ibid.
194 Dozy, *Supplément, pālūzah, crème, colle de farine.*
195 Ibid.

5 Burayk

This sweet is made of flour, sugar and eggs.[195]

6 Kabid faras is *ḥalwā* of sugar and starch.

7 Mushabbak a solid sweet of sugar, flour (*daqīq*) and ghee, made in Hodeidah.

8 Ghasūs is dry toasted (chick-)peas (*'atar*) eaten by children at the doors of schools or houses and in the streets and sūqs. There is a street-cry to announce it—*al-maghsūs al-ghasūs al-dāfi.*

9 Jiljilān, a sweetmeat made of pressed sesame-seed and sugar, is eaten in Ṣan'ā'. In the south it is called *mugalgal.*

10 Tunfāsh, *Popcorn*

This is prepared from maize (*ḥubūb Rūmī*) imported from abroad. It is heated on the *sāj* metal plate until the white centre comes out of it. It is not special to the 'Īd.

11 Masbali Rūmī, *Corn in the Cob (toasted).*

12 Lu"āṣ

The *lu"āṣ* (sing., *lu"aṣah*) *al-dhirih* is the sweet part sucked by tribes-people from the millet-cane (*qaṣab ḥaqq al-dhirih*) when it is still green, but *lu"aṣ al-qand* seems from descriptions to be a sort of barley-sugar.

13 Al-'Asal al-aswad, *Black Honey*

'Black honey' is made of sugar and alum (*al-sukkar wa-'l-shabb*) though, of the latter only a pinch is used. A strong infusion is made of coffee-husk (*qishr*) which is heavily boiled to bring the colour of the *qishr* into the infusion, then the actual *qishr* husk itself is strained away. The sugar and alum are then boiled up with the coloured infusion extracted from the *qishr* husk.

This 'honey' is a substitute for natural bee honey (*al-'asal al-nūbī*) which is far too dear for most Yemenis to use. It would only be wealthy houses (*al-buyūt al-kibārāt*) which could afford it. Or else bee honey would be used as a prescription (*waṣf ṭibbī*) for illness. Honey as a valuable remedy in case of sickness is commended in Prophetic Tradition. In the north the best honey is said to be *'asal 'Allānī,* honey of the star 'Allān[196] (September), good red honey. *Al-'asal al-Ṣayfī* of the preceding season is said to be a little weak (*fātir*); it is white. The lore on honey and apiculture in the Yemen is extensive. Hamdānī[197] tells us that Ḥaḍūrī honey was exported to Iraq in sections of *dhurah* cane (*qaṣab*) and cites a verse of Imra'u 'l-Qays on *al-shuhd al-Ḥaḍūrī*. Under the Rasūlids it formed part of the revenue from certain districts.[198] A common proverb in various versions in south Arabia is, *Lā ṣāḥub-ak 'asal la tilḥus-uh kull-uh,* If your friend be honey do not lick him all up. That is—do not presume on your friend's kindness.[199]

Drinks

1 *Coffee*

It need hardly be said that the lore on coffee, its cultivation, preparation and use is great indeed. The history of the coffee trade with eastern countries and Europe has been extensively explored by many writers. So no attempt is made here at a summary of what is known about Yemeni coffee, and only a few gleanings, collected at more or less random, are set down here.[200]

The infusion of the husk called *qishr* is widely drunk, even as far as Ḥaḍramawt where it is served with ginger and other spices. In the Yemen the spices used with *qishr* are called *'innāb.*[201] The coffee berry (*bunn*) is drunk also, rather after the style in which 'Turkish' coffee is prepared. When the berry brought such high prices from foreign merchants it was seemingly much less drunk than it is now. It is packed in coffee baskets of various sizes known as *a'ṭāl*[202] *ḥaqq al-bunn* made of palm-leaf. *Qihāw* is coffee of excellent quality, well prepared; the dimunitive, *qihaywah,* in contrast, means poor coffee. A clay coffee pot is called *jamanah* and the biggest size of *jamanah*[203] is known as *al-farkh.* The spout of the *jamanah* is stuffed with a *līfah* fibre to retain the grounds (*khathl(ah)*, a term also used for tea-leaves) of *qishr* coffee. A *jazwah* is a metal pot of the type known in other Arab countries as a *kanakah* used for the coffee berry. The berry is separated from the *qishr* on a *maqsharah* and is known as (*bunn*) *ṣāfi.* Coffee provided at a *tafriṭah,* a women's afternoon gathering, or a funeral (*mawt*), has spices like ginger (*zinjabīl*) bought in Sūq al-Mi'tārah.[204]

Rossi reports that the best *bunn,* coffee-berry, is Ānisī, Maṭarī, Ṣayḥī from Kawkabān, and Ḥaymī.

The introduction of coffee into the Yemen is associated with the saint 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Shādhilī (ob. 828/1424-5), but Landberg[205] suggests that it must have been considerably before this time. Al-Shādhilī is buried at Mocha at the mosque associated with his name. In the Lower Yemen it is or was customary to pour a libation to him (*Fātiḥah lā-rūḥ al-Shādhilī*)[206] when drinking it, and *qahwah Shādhiliyyah* is commonly said at least among the Shāfi'īs. Although the ulema attacked the use of it at first it has long had a respectable character and is sometimes associated with religion or nearly so.[207]

In the Yemen the ahl al-Kibs, the people of Kibs the well known village in Khawlān, badly destroyed by Egyptian forces, are noted for their love of coffee and have many jokes (*nawādir*) and tales (*ṭarīfah*) about coffee. Kibs is celebrated as a centre of scholarship and *hijrah* of the Kibsī Sayyids who used to organize a special caravan of pilgrims to Mecca at the time of the *ḥajj.* One of the Kibs people was sitting in the court of his tower-house (*dār*) as is the custom there, drinking coffee, when a stone fell on his head, whereat he is reported to have exclaimed, '(Better it fall) on my head and not on the coffee-pot (*Fī rāsī wa-lā fi 'l-jamanah*)!'[208] Another saying is, 'If a Kibsī loses his senses get him to sniff at the fibre (in the spout of the coffee-pot), (*Idhā sayyakh al-Kibsiyy shammamta-h al-līfah*).'[208]

196 Cf. 'The Cultivation of cereals...', 30.

197 *Ṣifah,* 198. For some notes on honey see Brian Doe and R. B. Serjeant, 'A fortified tower-house in Wādī Jirdān (Wāḥidī sultanate)', *BSOAS,* London, 1975, XXXVIII, II, 16.

198 According to the medieval Ms. *Mulakhkhaṣ al-fiṭan,* fol. 14 v., al-Yaman al-Akhḍar, mainly actually Wuṣāb, produced 45,500 *raṭls* of honey as part of the tax in kind worth 500,000 (dirhams).

199 *Jemenica,* 14, no. 70. Cf. 'Abdullāh Ya'qub Khān, *Qāmūs al-amthāl al-'Adaniyyah,* 9, no. 33, *Idhā ṣāḥib-ak 'asal khallī minn-ah waṣal.*

200 Apart from such sources used in this chapter, Rossi, op. cit., 163-4; Brauer, op. cit., 109 seq., see Peter Boxhall, 'The diary of a Mocha Coffee Agent', *Arabian Studies,* 1974, I, 102-18.

201 Like dates from abroad, not dry (*nāshif*), and sugar crystals (*nabāt*), or as F. M. Hunter, op. cit., 123, says, sugar candy.

202 Rossi, 164, mentions *fard.*

203 *Jamanah* = *ibrīq,* also used in the Sudan. *Laqqam* means to put Muraysī/ Mauritius sugar and coffee in a kettle to cook. One says, *laqqimī al-binn/ qishr.* Cf. *al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* I, 91, no. 253, *Sīd-ak milaqqam nājiḥ,* means 'Your lord (*sīd* = sayyid may refer to the Kibsī sayyids) doesn't need anything from you.' In general *laqqam* means to put something in the mouth of a person or thing—so it can be used of feeding an infant or old man.

204 See *Qānūn Ṣan'ā'*, section 6.

205 *Etudes...*, *Daṭīnah*, II, II, 1072, and the entire section *Ṭabīkh em-qahwah,* 1055-78.

206 The *Fātiḥah,* opening *sūrah* of the Qur'ān, would be recited and a little coffee poured on the ground.

207 Cf. *'Kitāb al-Basṭ wa-'l-salwah li-'l-muḥāwarah mā bayn al-shāhī wa-'l-qahwah', Prose and poetry from Ḥaḍramawt,* 38-53.

208 *Al-Amthāl al-Yamāniyah,* loc. cit. and I, 96, no. 271. *Līfah* is described as *sa'af.*

They say to a woman, 'When you are in a bad state drink/gulp down some coffee to yourself, *Idhā ḍāq ḥāl-ish shiribti/zaghafti lish qihāw/qahāw.*'[209] This will relieve of cares and anxiety.

Qāḍī Ismā'īl[210] tells of a *qabīlī* from the country who came to stay with a friend in Ṣan'ā'. His friend woke him early to pray the dawn prayer (*ṣalāt al-fajr*). When the *qabīlī* did not comply his host said, 'God bless with rain the country (in which they rouse the guest to take coffee, saying), "Get up to (go out) and relieve yourself, then come back and take coffee", but in Ṣan'ā' it's "Get up and pray, get up and pray", *Saqa 'llāh am-bilād "qum shukh wa-'rja' tqahwī", ammā fi Ṣan'ā', "qum ṣalli, qum ṣalli!"*'

2 *Tea*

Tea is cheaper than coffee (1973) but is not much used. It is fairly new in Ṣan'ā' and came in perhaps about the forties or fifties of the present century. This is parallel to the earlier introduction of tea into Ḥaḍramawt from the Far East—in the Ḥaḍramī cities it was drunk by the wealthy but was less respectable than coffee.[211] In Ṣan'ā' a certain 'Alī Ḍayfullāh used to sell it at the gate of the Secondary School near the present Wizārat al-Tarbiyah wa-'l-Ta'līm. People say of it, 'Tea dries up the mind, *Al-Shāhī yinashshif al-'aql*', and complain that it keeps them awake.

3 Sharāb al-qadīd;[212] *Apricot syrup drink*

We leave the apricot (*barqūq*) until it is dry, then wet it (*nibill-ah*) with water so as to rid it of dust, and put it in a bowl (*ṭāṣah*) with water and sugar, boiling it until it is cooked and setting it in a cooling window (*shubbāk*) to cool. The boiled apricot kernels (*qaḥāṭ*)[213] we eat with the syrup, removing the stone (*qawqa'*) from it.

The kernel of the apricot stone (*qawqa'*) is called *tawham*. Some kernels are bitter (*qubbī* = *ghayr ḥālī*, not sweet), but some are *lawzī* (lit., amond-like) and taste sweet (*ṭa'm-ah ḥālī*). Bitter kernels are mixed with raisins (*zabīb*) and heated which removes the bitter taste (*qabābah*).

4 Sharāb al-sha'īr *Barley-water*

We bring barley, boiling it with water and sugar till it boils, then take it off, pouring the water off (*nib'id-ah wa-ninazziz al-mā'*) the barley. We drink it when cold.

This is a rather expensive drink (1973) but is supposed to be good for one's health.

Seasonal and Festival Foods[214]

The times of year when fruit in season is eaten are given in the almanacs, and the *Bughyat al-fallāḥīn*[215] for example notes when green wheat grain for parching, called *farīk*, and green *dhurah* grain, called *jahīsh* are eaten. There are however certain occasions upon which special foods are consumed. All the days of autumn (*kharīf*) people eat *al-siḥil* (vb. *yisḥil*) which comprises lentils (*bilsin*), toasted apricot-stone kernels (*tawham*[216] *min ḥabbāt al-barqūq—yiḥammir-ah*), pumpkin (*qar'*) seeds, chick-peas (*ḍakhish/ṭakhish*) and almonds (*lawz*). All these seeds are of course parched or toasted.

During Ramaḍān diet varies a little from the ordinary. *Shufūt, ḥāmiḍah,* salad (*ṣalaṭah*), horse-radish (*qushmī*) and its leaves and jelly (*muḥallabiyyah*) are eaten, but *fūl* is avoided as already remarked. At the 'Īd, *mulayyam* sweets are eaten and there is a saying, 'Chick-peas [parched] and raisins are the sweets of the Feast, *Ḍakish/ṭakhish* (= *'atar*) *wa-zabīb ja'ālat*[217] *al-'Īd.*'

The customs connected with the rich special diet provided for the woman who has given birth to a child hold a special interest that makes it appropriate to conclude this chapter with a description of them. In early pregnancy a woman, at this stage called *mu'ayyifah,* probably from *'āfa,* to find repugnant, asks for food (*ukāl*) from her neighbours and/or relations, very likely on account of the morning sickness common at this stage.

After parturition, for up to forty days—when she goes to the *ḥammām*—a woman receives this special diet, and during this time she does no work at all. Daily for fifteen days, she is given a *shuqrī,* a small chicken about two weeks old, but possibly for a lesser period if the family be poor, and the chicken broth (*maraq al-shuqrī*) as well. If it is a male child and for some reason or other there is no *shuqrī*, they would at times give her fresh liver (*yikh bizū kabid tāzih*). In spring 1979 the *shuqrī,* which is greatly preferred to the imported dressed broiler fowl, and indeed is more expensive than it, was costing thirty to thirty-five *riyāls,* for they think the Yemeni type is superior to the imported. She also is given *ma'ṣūbah* (Bread dishes, no. 9), a wheaten bread dish, but with extra honey and ghee beyond what is usual. Coffee with fresh dates, etc., is obligatory (*al-qahwah bi-'l-rajīz ḍarūriyyah*)—in fact the brazier (*mawqid*) with coffee keeps going day and night. The two smallest children in the house eat with the mother who has just given birth—it is suggested that this is so that they may not be against the newly arrived child—or for some such reason.

At dawn (*fajr*) after the birth the new mother is given a drink of eggs (*shirb bayḍ*). Perhaps also at this time she is brought rue (*shadbāb*)[218] for good fortune, to avert the evil eye (*yuzīl al-'ayn*) and against the Jinn. In the morning of each day and at night she is censed with aromatics—they cense her to stop the Jinn (*Ṣabāḥ kull yawm wa-'l-layl titjammar bi-'l-bukhūr yibakhkhirū-hā li-man' al-Ǧinn*). In the morning about 7 a.m., and for seven days, her breakfast (*faṭūr*) is *ma'ṣūbah* along with coffee called *qahwah al-wālidah* consisting of spices and fresh dates,[219] all boiled up together in the coffee *jamanah*-pot—this is so that the blood will return (*ya'ūd al-dam*). She must also have bread freshly baked that morning (*khubz ṭariyy*).

After this she would have fruit or tinned (fruit) (*fawākih wa-mu'allabat*).

At noon, about 12 a.m., she will have *harīsh* wheat porridge or *sabāyā* wheat pastry with ghee and honey, or *ma'ṣūbah* and the chicken (*shuqrī*), with such vegetables as are the ordinary food of the house—and of course, coffee.

The evening meal (*'ashā*) will be mainly chicken or meat.

For the first seven days after parturition the husband's family provides the special diet for the mother, and for the next seven days after that the mother's own family does so. On the first

209 Ibid, loc. cit.; *Jemenica,* 14, no. 72, cf. 105, no. 730.
210 Qāḍī Ismā'īl, unpublished.
211 As appears in *Kitab al-Basṭ* supra.
212 *Ṣifah,* 198, speaks of *qadīd al-khawkh* (*khawkh* in Class. Arabic is a peach). They dry the apricot (*yabbisu 'l-barqūq*), i.e., *yiqaddidū-h fi 'l-jibā',* dry it on the roof. You can also have *laḥm qadīd,* dried meat.
213 Sing., *quḥṭah* = *ḥabbah,* here, kernel. *Quḥṭah* can also be used to mean a handful, or, in the phrase *quḥṭat-hā ṣaghīrah,* a small woman. Of a small man, they say, *'Umr-ah fi baṭn-ah,* His life is in his belly'.
214 While one should not try to draw too close parallels between festival meals in Islam, including those of al-'Īd al-Kabīr and al-'Īd al-Ṣaghīr and what existed in the pre-Islamic period, one should not ignore Jacques Ryckmans, 'Le repas rituel dans le religion sud-arabe', *Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae F. M. T. de Liagre Böhl dedicatae,* ed. M. A. Beek et alii, Leiden, 1973; 'Ritual meals in the South Arabian Religion', *Proc. of the 6th Seminar for Arabian Studies,* London, 1973, 36-39.
215 Cf. 'The cultivation of cereals..., 42, 47, passim.
216 Sayings connected with this word are, *'Mā 'ind-ah min tawhamī,* He has no kernel' i.e., *'Mā 'ind-ah mukhkh,* He has no brain.' *'Al-tawhamī ḥaqq-ah ṣaghīr,* He's got a small kernel/brain.'
217 *Ja'ālah* is anything in the way of sweets, dessert, for a child. Money for sweets, *al-fulūs ḥaqq al-ja'ālah. Ja'ālah* would also be eaten on a wedding night. A saying about raisins used to end off a story told to children is, *'Law baytī qarīb la'ddī ghuṭā zabīb,* If my house were near-by I'd give a basket-tray of raisins.'
218 *Shadhāb,* ruta chalepensis L. Schweinfurth, is also much used by the Yemeni Jews, cf. Brauer, op. cit., 137, under similar circumstances. Cf. al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf... b. Rasūl, *al-Mu'tamad fi 'l-adwiyah al-mufradah,* Cairo, 1370/1951, 219. At the birth the women ululate (*yihj lū* (sic)) and at various times during the ceremonies described here.
219 *Al-qahwah al-muḥawwajah bi-'l-rajīz wa-'l-qirfah.* The *ḥawāyij* are *sukkar ziyādah, tamr, zabīb, qirfah, zinjabīl.*

morning her father and mother will come to make the congratulory visit—*al-farḥah,* which is the term also applied to the gift of the ingredients of the new mother's coffee (*mawādd qahwat al-wālidah*), the spices (*al-ḥawāyij*)[220] ectetera brought by her father. For these seven days in the morning the relations and friends make congratulory visits bringing *shadhāb*-rue with them; nowadays the custom has grown up of bring presents also. This goes on till a little after mid-day (*ẓuhr*). On the third day after parturition the women of her family bring a *dallah* of coffee (*qahwah*) and rue to ward off the satans (*shadhāb yiqra' al-shayāṭīn, yirda'-hum*).

On the seventh day the new mother goes to the *ḥammām*-bath. They make her wear coral and cense her with *tathwīr* against the satans (*yilabbisū-ha 'l-mirjān wa-yibkharū la-hā 'l-tathwīr min al-shayāṭīn*).[221] They break an egg for her at the door of the bath and when she returns they break an egg for her (*yiksarū la-ha 'l-bayḍah fī bāb al-ḥammām, wa-'inda mā tirja' yiksarū la-hā bayḍah*). This egg is usually broken in front of the door of the house. They wave this egg in a circular motion around her and then dash it on to the ground. It is interesting to remark that, when staying with a Bohrah family in Bombay, festal domestic ceremonies include the same action with a coconut, but without throwing it down. Similar customs of breaking eggs at a birth are also found in Ḥaḍramawt and have attracted the censure of some of the ulema. When the new mother visits her family in Ṣan'ā' eggs are also broken then.

On the seventh day there is a party (*ḥaflah*), called appropriately *al-Sābi'*, in the birth-room (*makān al-wulād*) with a *mawlid*[222] or a singing woman (*mughanniyah*) and her family bring *qahwah* and *shadhāb*-rue to it. If the child should be a boy[223] he is usually circumcised on the seventh day (*sābi' yawm al-khitān 'ādat-an*). The father (*ab/wālid al-makhtūn*) gives a big breakfast (*ṣabūḥ*), with *sabāyā,* wheat pastry with ghee and honey. The maternal uncle (*khāl*) holds the baby boy and the *muzayyin*[224] circumcises him—the circumciser (*mukhattin*) is paid by his father, or, among the Qabā'il, by the child's maternal uncle. Visitors bring a white dress (*badlah*), described as *maqāmiṭ,* a *kirbāsah* which is a skirt (*fustān*) for the boy.

On the fifteenth day the mother's family pay her the visit, bringing her the gift called *ziyārah* (*yijībū, yiddaw la-ha 'l-ziyārah*) a gift of ground flour (*ṭaḥīn*), eggs with ghee and honey on top (*bayḍ fawq-ah saman wa-'asal*), chickens and, optionally *qahwah* or *qishr* coffee. Nowadays, but not formerly, they bring clothing, a *baṭṭāniyyah,* cover/blanket, for the infant.

After the first fifteen days there is a *ḥaflah* in the birth room, a *tafriṭah,* in the afternoon which goes on until the forty days are completed, with the *zaffah* and *raqṣ* dancing, and *mawlid.* If the child is a boy they praise her (*yimdaḥū-hā*), saying '*Ǧannah bi-mā jā lish*, Felicitations on what has come to you,' or '*wuṣūl ghāyib*, here meaning, 'something awaited', but if it be a girl the visitor will say, '*Ǧannah lish bi-'l-'āfiyah*, Congratulations on your health.' This means that the visitor is not overjoyed (*farḥān*) by the arrival of a girl!

On the fortieth[225] day the new mother's family make an invitation ('*azūmah*)—they feast the parturient (*yishakkimu 'l-wālidah*),[226] the feast being known as *al-shikmah.* It is a large entertainment (*ḍiyāfah*) with a *dhabīḥah* slaughter animal. After the *shikmah* come *yawmayn ḥaflah* two days of celebration.

It will be perceived that a birth involves the families in a great deal of expense and it is little wonder that this should be expressed in a proverbial saying, '*'Irsayn wa-lā wilādah,* (Rather) two marriages [which cost plenty] than a single birth.'

220 The *farḥah ḥawāyij* would include raisins (*zabīb*) and the fresh dates (*rafīz ḥaqq al-qahwah*).

221 No informant has been able so far to say exactly what *tathwīr* is.

222 Account of the life of the Prophet in prose and sung verse.

223 In Ṣan'ā' girls are not circumcised, but they are in the Shāfi'ī Tihāmah, although it is said that this custom is falling into disuse. Cf. Rossi, op. cit., 179 for a brief note on circumcision.

224 One finds *muzayyins* in every Quarter of Ṣan'ā', but there is no restriction limiting a family to employing any *muzayyin* local to the Quarter.

225 Rossi, loc. cit., describes a ceremony called *Wafā'* which is basically the expulsion of an 'invisible' being called *al-Zinayhiyyah,* which they believe rests under the bed of the parturient woman.

He describes also the ornamentation (*shijjāf*) of the birth room with drawings containing pious phrases, verses of the Qur'ān, the name of the Prophet and that of 'Alī, and cloth called *simaydār*, which are taken down on the fortieth day.

226 *Tishkum ba'd al-arba'īn al-shikmah.*